

BRILL'S COMPANIONS OF PHILOSOPHY – 1  
CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

# Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy

*Edited by*  
**Nathan Jun**



BRILL

## Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy

# Brill's Companions of Philosophy

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*To Camille, With Love*





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## Editor's Preface

Over the course of the past 150 years, “writers from all sides of the political spectrum” have consistently “ignored, maligned, ridiculed, abused, misunderstood, and misrepresented” anarchism,<sup>1</sup> characterizing it by turns as “destructive, violent, and nihilistic”;<sup>2</sup> “pathetic and ineffectual”;<sup>3</sup> “puerile and absurd”;<sup>4</sup> and “irresponsible, immature, and unrealistic.”<sup>5</sup> Anarchists themselves, meanwhile, have been variously portrayed as “wild-eyed” fanatics and terrorists who “reject[t] everything but lac[k] any idea of how to replace it”;<sup>6</sup> hopelessly romantic idealists who abjure the “present, evil world”<sup>7</sup> and pine for a “mythical golden age”;<sup>8</sup> proponents of “mindless action” who dismiss “all intellectual activity [as] distracting or even reactionary”;<sup>9</sup> and harmless apolitical poseurs who “do nothing but contemplate their navels.”<sup>10</sup> Under the best of circumstances they have been dismissed as hacks; under the worst they have been persecuted, beaten, jailed, and even murdered, their writings censored, their organizations violently repressed, their movements crushed.<sup>11</sup>

Academics in particular have proven exceptionally antagonistic to anarchism, habitually treating it “with prejudicial incredulity, condescension, and even hostility ... beyond the normal ignorance of the over-specialized.”<sup>12</sup> Until recently, scholarly researchers have had precious little interest in, or regard

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- 1 B. Morris, *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism: A Brian Morris Reader* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2014), 64; cf. P. McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 4–5.
  - 2 Morris, *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism*, 64; S. Clark, *Living Without Domination: The Possibility of an Anarchist Utopia* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2012), 2.
  - 3 Clark, *Living Without Domination*, 2.
  - 4 P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press 2010), xiv; cf. I. Horowitz, *The Anarchists* (New York: Dell, 1964), 603.
  - 5 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 14; cf. Clark, *Living Without Domination*, 4; J. Joll, *The Anarchists* (London: Routledge, 2013), 257.
  - 6 Clark, *Living Without Domination*, 2.
  - 7 E. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 57.
  - 8 Clark, *Living Without Domination*, 4; cf. Morris, *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism*, 64–65; McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 64.
  - 9 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 13.
  - 10 Morris, *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism*, 65–66; cf. McLaughlin, 10–11; C. Honeywell, “Bridging the Gaps: Twentieth-Century Anglo-American Anarchist Thought,” in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, ed. R. Kinna (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 112.
  - 11 N. Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), viii–ix.
  - 12 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 14.

for, anarchism under any description, while the few exceptions have almost invariably dismissed it as “irrational,”<sup>13</sup> “ideologically incoherent,”<sup>14</sup> and “theoretically nugatory”<sup>15</sup>—a “shallow creed”<sup>16</sup> that lacks “philosophical rigour”<sup>17</sup> or “anything like an adequate theoretical formulation.”<sup>18</sup>

All of this being said, there is widespread agreement at the time of this writing that anarchism's fortunes have improved dramatically—not just in intellectual circles, but also, and more importantly, in the wider context of global politics. This agreement is often articulated in terms of three general claims.

The first is that the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries witnessed a “remarkable resurgence” of anarchist or anarchist-inspired politics that began—or, at the very least, was first recognized—in the context of the anti-globalization movement of the late 1990s.<sup>19</sup> Far from being an isolated and

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13 Ibid., 170; cf. E. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*.

14 Honeywell, “Bridging the Gaps,” 112; cf. Joll, *The Anarchists*, 257; D. Miller, *Anarchism* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1985), 3.

15 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 13.

16 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 663.

17 Ibid., xiv.

18 McLaughlin; *Anarchism and Authority*, 13; cf. Morris, *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism*, 65.

19 J. Shantz, *Living Anarchy: Theory and Practice in Anarchist Movements* (Palo Alto, Calif: Academica Press, 2009), 31; cf. B. Epstein, “Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement,” *Monthly Review* 53, no. 4 (Sept. 2001), <https://monthlyreview.org/2001/09/01/anarchism-and-the-anti-globalization-movement/>; D. Graeber, “The New Anarchists,” *New Left Review* 13 (2002): 61–73; G. Chesters, “Shape Shifting,” *Anarchist Studies* 11, no. 1 (2003): 42–65; S. Sheehan, *Anarchism* (London: Reaktion, 2003), 7–24; J. Purkis and J. Bowen, “Introduction: Why Anarchism Still Matters,” in *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, eds. J. Purkis and J. Bowen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 1–20; M. Rupert, “Anticapitalist Convergence?: Anarchism, Socialism, and the Global Justice Movement,” in *Rethinking Globalism*, ed. M. Steger (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 121–136; L. Farrer, “A Revolt to Live,” *Anarchist Studies* 14, no. 2 (2006): 131–155; B. Epstein and C. Dixon, “A Politics and a Sensibility: The Anarchist Current on the U.S. Left,” in *Toward a New Socialism*, eds. A. Anton and R. Schmitt (Lanham, Md. Lexington Books, 2007), 445–462; T. May, “Anarchism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*, vol. 1, eds. G. Anderson and K. Herr (London: SAGE, 2007), 102; J. Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalization* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 15–16; T. May, Introduction to *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, eds. N. Jun and S. Wahl (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010), 1–4; C. Milstein, *Anarchy and Its Aspirations* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2010), 29–30; F. Dupuis-Déri, “Anarchism,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, vol. 1, eds. B. Badie, D. Berh-Schlosser, and L. Morlino (London: SAGE, 2011), 74–75; S. Evren, “Introduction: How New Anarchism Changed the World (of Opposition) After Seattle and Gave Birth to Post-Anarchism,” in *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, eds. D. Rousselle and S. Evren (London: Pluto Press, 2011);

anomalous by-product of this movement, moreover, the “full-blown anarchist revival [that] reached critical mass around the turn of the Millenium”<sup>20</sup> has been widely identified as a major factor of its emergence as a distinctive and powerful political force. Both at the time and subsequently, the basic political commitments of this “new anarchism” were widely characterized as the movement’s principal “basis for organizing”<sup>21</sup> and the source of its “common philosophy.”<sup>22</sup>

The second claim is that this resurgence, contrary to the expectations of many, has continued to grow in strength and influence over the past two decades and, in so doing, has had far-reaching and transformative effects on political movements throughout the world.<sup>23</sup> As early as 2001 Barbara Epstein proposed that the anarchist-inspired movements of the time were poised to deal a *coup de grace* to “the traditional socialist left.”<sup>24</sup> Three years later, David Graeber noted that anarchism was “veritably exploding,” that “anarchist or anarchist-inspired movements [were] growing everywhere,” and that the “traditional anarchist principles—autonomy, voluntary, association, self-organization, mutual aid, direct democracy” that motivated and inspired the anti-globalization movement were “playing the same role in radical movements of all kinds everywhere.”<sup>25</sup> Since then the same kind of analysis has been applied to a diverse array of global political phenomena including the Arab Spring (2010–2012),<sup>26</sup> the global Occupy movement (2011–2012),<sup>27</sup>

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R. Amster, *Anarchism Today* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2012), xix–xxviii; R. Sparrow, “Anarchism Since 1992,” in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, vol. 2, eds. R. Goodin, P. Pettit, and T. Pogge (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 282–284; A. Cornell, *Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland, Calif.: University of California Press, 2016), 291–300.

20 U. Gordon: *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 5.

21 D. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2004), 2.

22 L. Fernandez, *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Anti-Globalization Movement* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 51.

23 See C. Fominaya, *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests, Occupations, and Uprisings Are Changing the World* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), especially 71–78.

24 Epstein, “Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement.”

25 Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 2.

26 See, for example, L. Galián, “New Modes of Collective Actions: The Reemergence of Anarchism in Egypt,” in *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized Activism Beyond the Arab Uprisings*, ed. F. Gerges (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 351–372.

27 See, for example, M. Bray, *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street* (Winchester, U.K.: Zero Books, 2013).

the *Indignados* movement in Spain (2011-present),<sup>28</sup> the Quebec student protests (2012),<sup>29</sup> and the *Nuit Debout* movement (2016).<sup>30</sup> It is in this context that anarchism has been described as “the most vibrant and exciting political movement of our time”<sup>31</sup> and even as “the global revolutionary movement [of] the twenty-first century.”<sup>32</sup>

The third claim is that anarchism has witnessed a corresponding “resurgence in the academy as a topic of cutting-edge scholarship and dynamic pedagogy.”<sup>33</sup> As Jeff Shantz notes by way of summary:

A glance across the academic landscape shows that in less than a decade ... there has been substantial growth in the number of people in academic positions who identify as anarchists. Indeed, it is probably safe to say that unlike any other time in history, the last ten years have seen anarchists carve out spaces in the halls of academia. This is especially true in terms of people pursuing graduate studies and those who have become members of faculty. Several anarchists have taken up positions in prominent, even so-called elite, universities.... The flourishing of anarchism in the academy is also reflected in other key markers of academic activity [including] academic articles focusing on various aspects of anarchist theory and practice; the publications of numerous books on anarchism by most of the major academic presses; and growing numbers of courses dealing in some way with anarchism or including anarchism within the course content. There have also emerged ... professionally recognized networks and associations of anarchist researchers, such as the Anarchist Studies Network of the Political Studies Association in Britain.<sup>34</sup>

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28 See, for example, D. Shannon, *The End of the World As We Know It?: Crisis, Resistance, and the Age of Austerity* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2014), 144–146.

29 See, for example, F. Dupuis-Déri, *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs?: Anarchy in Action Around the World* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2014), vii, 4, 69–71, 76–78.

30 R. Georgy, “Des livres que amènent àNuit Debout,” *Libération* (11 Jul. 2016), [http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/07/11/des-livres-qui-amenent-a-nuit-debout\\_1465558](http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/07/11/des-livres-qui-amenent-a-nuit-debout_1465558).

31 A. Prichard, *Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (London: Routledge, 2013), 1.

32 D. Graeber and A. Grubacic, “Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the Twenty-First Century,” *Dissident Voice* (6 Jan. 2004), <http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Jan04/Graeber-Grubacic106.htm>; cf. C. Sartwell, *Against the State: An Introduction to Anarchist Political Theory* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2008), 14.

33 Amster, *Anarchism Today*, xiii.

34 J. Shantz, “Anarchists in the Academy,” in *The Best of Social Anarchism*, eds. H. Ehrlich and A.H.S. Boy (Tucson, Ariz.: See Sharp Press, 2013), 109–110; cf. R. Amster, L. Fernandez,

In view of the foregoing, some have concluded that anarchism “has become a respected field of study within academia”<sup>35</sup> or, in Shantz’s somewhat cheekier formulation, that it is “suddenly ... almost hip to be an anarchist academic.”<sup>36</sup>

Whether these claims provide an accurate reflection of the present and the recent past is a complicated question that far exceeds the remit of this preface. It is not my intention here to subject them to detailed critique, nor even to challenge the broad consensus they express, as others have already done so at considerable length.<sup>37</sup> That said, the third claim does raise

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A. DeLeon, A. Nocella, and D. Shannon, eds., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy* (London: Routledge, 2009), 1–8; B. Franks, “Introduction: Anarchism and Moral Philosophy,” in *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, eds. B. Franks and M. Wilson (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1; C. Honeywell, *A British Anarchist Tradition: Herbert Read, Alex Comfort, and Colin Ward* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 2; Amster, *Anarchism Today*, 151; C. Kaltefleiter and A. Nocella, “Anarchy in the Academy: Staying True to Anarchism as an Academic-Activist,” in *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education*, ed. R. Haworth (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2012), 200–217; R. Kinna, Introduction to *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, ed. R. Kinna (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 3–4.

35 Amster, et al., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies*, 5.

36 Shantz, “Anarchists in the Academy,” 110.

37 Critiques of the first and second claims have often centered on the ambiguous relationship between the ostensibly “anarchist-inspired” politics of the anti-globalization movement and the broader anarchist tradition. See, for example, G. Curran, *Twenty-First Century Dissent: Anarchism, Anti-Globalization, and Environment* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!*, 5; S. Hirsch and L. van der Walt, “Final Reflections: The Vicissitudes of Anarchist and Syndicalist Trajectories, 1940 to the Present,” in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial World, 1870–1940*, eds. S. Hirsch and L. van der Walt (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 397–400; A. Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 165–166; B. Morris, “Reflections on the ‘New Anarchism,’” in Morris, *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism*, 133–148; G. Smulewicz-Zucker, “Illusory Alternatives: Neo-Anarchism’s Disengaged and Reactionary Leftism,” in *Radical Intellectuals and the Subversion of Progressive Politics*, eds. G. Smulewicz-Zucker and M. Thompson (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 121–147. For somewhat more nuanced (if occasionally pessimistic) discussions of the place of anarchism in contemporary academia, see Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 2–7; J. Purkis, “Towards an Anarchist Sociology,” in Purkis and Bowen, *Changing Anarchism*, 40–41; P. Gelderloos, “The Difference Between Anarchy and the Academy” (2009), *The Anarchist Library*, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-the-difference-between-anarchy-and-the-academy>; McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 13–15; J. Suissa, *Anarchism and Education* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010), 1, 143; Shantz, “Anarchists in the Academy”; L. Davis, “Anarchism,” in *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, eds. V. Geoghegan and R. Wilford (London: Routledge, 2014), 213–214, 143.

certain issues that must be briefly addressed in order to establish the context of this book. Although there is no question that “the volume of [scholarly] work in anarchist studies has grown substantially” over the last twenty years and “interest in anarchist research has grown in parallel,”<sup>38</sup> the notion that anarchist studies has altogether transcended its marginal status—let alone that it has ignited an “anarchist turn” in one or several disciplines or come to be recognized as a “respected field” in its own right—is patently absurd. It would be far more accurate to say that anarchism is *tolerated* to a greater degree than in the past—a not insignificant development in its own right, but scarcely an indication that anarchism has supplanted deeply entrenched liberal and Marxist orthodoxies in the academy. (Even if it were, this would not necessarily be a positive development, as has been made clear by Shantz, Gelderloos, and others who have reflected on anarchism’s problematic relationship with formal academia.)

More germane to our purposes is the fact that this toleration has not been practiced equally across the disciplines. Of particular note in this regard is philosophy, which, by all reasonable appearances, is no more receptive to anarchism now than it was twenty years ago.<sup>39</sup> While it is true that “the range of disciplinary territories over which anarchists now roam has expanded,” only a smattering of recent scholarship on anarchism deals explicitly with philosophy, and the number of academic philosophers who claim anarchism as a principal research focus is negligible. As a result, philosophy has played a comparatively minor role in contemporary anarchist studies and has been underrepresented in general overviews of the discipline. This state of affairs is problematic not only because it involves the omission of a canonical intellectual practice from a discipline that prides itself on multidisciplinaryity, but also, and more importantly, because anarchism itself is frequently described as a “philosophy” and, to this extent at least, warrants far more explicitly philosophical investigation than it has received to date.

The resurgent interest in a form of politics that has been described as “new anarchism”—or, at the very least, as “anarchist-inspired”—has quite understandably provoked a desire to more fully understand the broader anarchist tradition that serves as its inspiration. In the absence of rigorous philosophical analysis, however, the basic theoretical and political commitments of this tradition have tended to be misunderstood. This, in turn, has generated a great deal of confusion regarding the nature of contemporary anarchism as well as its relationship

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38 Kinna, Introduction to *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, 3.

39 For a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon see Paul McLaughlin’s contribution to this volume as well as the editor’s critical introduction.

to other forms of political thought, including earlier iterations of anarchism itself. While the present volume is in some respects intended to remedy this situation, the paucity of scholarly literature explicitly focusing on the relationship between anarchism and philosophy necessitates a somewhat different strategy.

Unlike other companion-style texts, which more often than not provide general outlines of established discussions within single disciplines (or across multiple disciplines), the present volume is seeking to fill a void; for this reason, it adopts a self-consciously inventive approach to its subject matter. Many of the chapters included herein consider anarchism's pertinence to other philosophical theories and systems within the Western intellectual tradition (e.g., Marxism, libertarianism, liberalism, existentialism, phenomenology, nationalism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, pacifism). Others examine it in relation to specific philosophical subdisciplines (e.g., ethics, environmental philosophy, feminist philosophy), topics (e.g., sexuality, aesthetics), methodological or stylistic tendencies (e.g., Continental philosophy, analytic philosophy), or eras in the history of philosophy (e.g., nineteenth-century American and European philosophy).

Some explore their subject matter through highly specified lenses; others employ more conventionally synoptic approaches. Whatever their particular angle, all of them seek to shed light on the various ways that anarchism has been influenced and, in some cases, transformed by its engagement with non-anarchist philosophical discourses, as well as the distinctive contributions that anarchism itself has made, and continues to make, to the discipline of philosophy. It is the collective hope of editor and contributors alike that doing so will prompt further exploration of anarchism and philosophy and that this will lead to a fuller integration of the subject into the diverse fold of anarchist studies

*N.J. Jun*

January 2017

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# Anarchism and Philosophy: A Critical Introduction

Nathan Jun

## The Problem of Definitions

What is the relationship between anarchism and philosophy, and in what sense, if any, can anarchism be understood as a “philosophy” in its own right? How we answer these questions depends crucially, of course, on how we define the operative terms, both of which have been ascribed a bewildering range of conflicting meanings. Just as philosophy “has been understood in so many ways that it is practically useless to come up with a definition which embraces all that philosophers have sought to accomplish,”<sup>1</sup> anarchism, too, has long been regarded as “disparate and incoherent” and has frequently been accused of being “too diverse” to qualify as a single, uniform entity.<sup>2</sup> (It is no wonder, as James Joll once remarked, that “anyone who has tried to write about anarchism sometimes comes to a point at which he wonders just what it is he is writing about.”<sup>3</sup>)

In an initial effort to clarify matters somewhat, we might distinguish between two sorts of definitions. Those of the first sort, which we can call “generic,” identify a given *definiendum* as a particular instance of a general kind (as in “Bowser is a dog”). Those of the second sort, which we can call “specific,” indicate how a given *definiendum* differs from other instances of the same kind (as in “Bowser is a brown dog.”) In generic definitions like “Bowser is a dog,” whatever is true of the general kind (“dog”) is true of all its particular instances (including “Bowser”). The same is not true of specific definitions like “Bowser is a brown dog” insofar as they involve a particular predicate (“brown”) that is exclusively applied to a particular instance (“Bowser”) of a general kind (“dog”). As such, the question of how best to define a given term is reducible to two primary concerns, the first of which pertains to the general kind(s) of which the *definiendum* is a particular instance, the second of which pertains to what distinguishes the *definiendum* from all other instances of the same kind(s).

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1 L. Navia, *The Adventure of Philosophy* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), 3.

2 D. Morland, “Anti-capitalism and Poststructuralist Anarchism,” in *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, eds. J. Purkis and J. Bowen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23.

3 J. Joll, “Singing, Dancing and Dynamite: Review Jean Maitron, *Le Mouvement Anarchiste en France*,” *Times Literary Supplement* (September 10, 1976): 1092.

Disputes over the meaning of “anarchism” are sometimes reducible to disputes over specific definitions—as when Jones defines anarchism as a philosophy that rejects all authority as such, whereas Smith defines it more narrowly as a philosophy that regards all states as illegitimate. In this case, Jones and Smith agree on the general kind of which anarchism is a particular instance but disagree about how it differs from all other instances of that kind. This is in marked contrast with disputes over whether anarchism should be considered an ideology,<sup>4</sup> a political philosophy,<sup>5</sup> a social system,<sup>6</sup> a theory of organization,<sup>7</sup>

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- 4 See, e.g., L. Davis, “Anarchism,” in *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, eds. V. Geoghegan and R. Wilford (London: Routledge, 2014), 213–238; D. Miller, *Anarchism* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1985); R. Sylvan, “Anarchism,” in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, eds. R. Goodin and P. Pettit (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 215, 233; and D. Weir, *Introduction to Anarchy and Culture* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
  - 5 See, e.g., B. Christopher, et al., “The Relevance of Anarchism” in *What Is Anarchism?* ed. D. Rooum (London: Freedom Press, 1993), 70–72; G. Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); F. Depuis-Déri, “Anarchy in Political Philosophy,” in *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, eds. N. Jun and S. Wahl (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009), 9–24; P. Eltzbacher, *Anarchism: Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy* (London: Freedom Press, 1960); M. Egoumenides, *Philosophical Anarchism and Political Obligation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014); G. Gaus and J. Chapman, “Anarchism and Political Philosophy: An Introduction,” in *NOMOS IXI: Anarchism*, eds. J.R. Pennock and J. Chapman (New York: New York University Press, 1978), xxii–xl; E. Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969), 50, 67; R. Hoffman, ed., *Anarchism as Political Philosophy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2005); P. Kropotkin, “Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal,” in *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*, ed. R. Baldwin (New York: Dover, 1970), 114–144; R. Long, “Anarchism,” in *The Routledge Companion to Social and Political Philosophy*, eds. G. Gaus and F. D’Agostino (New York: Routledge, 2013), 217–230; P. McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2012); A. Parsons, ed., *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis* (Chicago: Parsons, 1887); H. Read, *The Philosophy of Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1940); A. Ritter, *Anarchism: A Conceptual Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); R. Rucker, *Anarchosyndicalism* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2004); and C. Sartwell, *Against the State: An Introduction to Anarchist Political Theory* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2008), among countless other examples.
  - 6 See, e.g., P. Kropotkin, “Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles,” in *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*, 46.
  - 7 See, e.g., Paul and Percival Goodman, *Communitas: Ways of Livelihood and Means of Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); E. Reclus, “Anarchy,” in *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus*, eds. J. Clark and C. Martin (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2014), 120–132; and C. Ward, “Anarchism as a Theory of Social Organisation,” in *Patterns of Anarchy: A Collection of Writings on the Anarchist Tradition*, eds. L. Krimerman and L. Perry (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 349–351.

a sensibility,<sup>8</sup> a temperament,<sup>9</sup> an attitude,<sup>10</sup> an ideal,<sup>11</sup> a faith,<sup>12</sup> a culture,<sup>13</sup> a tradition,<sup>14</sup> an orientation,<sup>15</sup> a tendency,<sup>16</sup> a movement,<sup>17</sup> a recurring historical phenomenon,<sup>18</sup> or something else entirely. Such disputes concern the generic definition of anarchism and, as such, are obviously deeper and more profound than those of the former sort. Furthermore, because the definitions of general kinds themselves are often contested, even those who ostensibly share a given generic definition may nonetheless disagree over what this definition entails.

The fact that all of this applies equally to the term “philosophy” adds an additional level of complexity to the questions posed at the outset. In order to ascertain the relationship between anarchism and philosophy (or *A* and *P* as a shorthand), one must first determine the general kinds of which each is a particular instance—that is, one must define them generically. One possibility

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- 8 See, e.g., R. Amster, *Anarchism Today* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2012), xiv.
  - 9 See, e.g., J. Joll, *The Anarchists* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 24; T. Perlin, “The Recurrence of Defiance,” in *Contemporary Anarchism*, ed. T. Perlin (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1979), 1.
  - 10 See, e.g., D. Apter and J. Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 260; D. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2002), 4.
  - 11 P. Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2005), 158; J. Billington, *Fires in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1980), 415; E. Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1965), 53; and N. Walter, *About Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 2002), 29.
  - 12 See, e.g., G. Baldelli, *Social Anarchism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2009), 2; Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 4; and Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 39.
  - 13 See, e.g., J. Cohn, *Underground Passages: Anarchist Resistance Culture, 1848–2011* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2015); and U. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto, 2008).
  - 14 See, e.g., J. Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation: Hermeneutic, Aesthetics, Politics* (Selingsgrove, Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), 56, 80, 204.
  - 15 See, e.g., J. Ferrell, “Against the Law: Anarchist Criminology,” in *Thinking Critically About Criminology*, eds. B. MacLean and D. Milovanovic (Vancouver: Collective Press, 1997), 146.
  - 16 See, e.g., D. Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2009), 214; and Walter, *About Anarchism*, 27.
  - 17 See, e.g., B. Morris, “The Revolutionary Socialism of Peter Kropotkin,” in *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism: A Brian Morris Reader* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2014), 205; and J. Suissa, *Anarchism and Education: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010), 8.
  - 18 See, e.g., M. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, trans. I. Isca and H. Becker (London: Freedom Press, 1995), 1; P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010), xiii–xiv; Walter, *About Anarchism*, 27–28.

is that *A* and *P* are particular instances of altogether *different* kinds. In this case, any relationship between them is purely contingent insofar as the instantiation of *A* is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the instantiation of *P* (and vice versa).

Another possibility is that *A* and *P* are particular instances of the *same* general kind (call it "*Z*"). In this case, both *A* and *P* are necessarily related to *Z* (since the instantiation of *Z* is a necessary but not sufficient condition for both the instantiation of *A* as well as the instantiation of *P*), *Z* is contingently related to *A* and *P* (since the instantiation of *A* and the instantiation of *P* are sufficient but not necessary conditions for the instantiation of *Z*), and the relationship between *A* and *P* is contingent (since the instantiation of *A* is neither necessary nor sufficient for the instantiation of *P*, and vice versa).

Still another possibility is that *A* itself is a particular instance of the general kind *P*. In this case, *A* is necessarily related to *P* insofar as the instantiation of the latter is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the instantiation of the former. This, in turn, raises the question of how *A* is specifically defined—that is, how it is distinguished from all other instances of the general kind *P*. Now, if a generic definition of *P*—for example, "*P* is a particular instance of the general kind *Z*"—is simply stipulated, ascertaining the definition of *A* amounts to determining whether *A* itself is a particular instance of *P*, a particular instance of *Z*, or a particular instance of some altogether different general kind. The problem with the case at hand, however, is that the definition of *P* itself is deeply disputed and not simply stipulated. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, therefore, we must begin by independently considering the various ways "anarchism" and "philosophy" have been defined, as this will presumably reveal several possibilities with regard to how the two are related.

### Definitions of Philosophy

As Alexis Papazoglou notes, "[W]hen philosophers give definitions of philosophy they are not usually offering descriptive definitions ... of a cultural practice that a sociologist or anthropologist might have given" but "normative definitions" that prescribe "what philosophy should be, what it *should* be aiming at, how it *should* be aiming at it, and so on...."<sup>19</sup> The goal of this section, it must be emphasized, is not to make prescriptions of the latter sort but merely to understand in what relevant sense(s) anarchism can be conceived as a

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19 A. Papazoglou, "Philosophy, Its Pitfalls, Some Rescue Plans, and Their Complications," *Metaphilosophy* 43, nos. 1–2 (2012): 4.

philosophy or, at the very least, as relating to philosophy in some way. As such, the definitions we consider will be purely descriptive in nature.

In ordinary language the word “philosophy” generally indicates a particular approach to, or perspective on, something (as in “philosophy of parenting” or “philosophy of management”). Although this constitutes a generic definition in the sense of specifying what kind of thing philosophy is, it is unhelpful for our purposes since it is trivially true that anarchism entails a particular approach or perspective. (As Peter Marshall says, “All anarchists are philosophical in a general sense.”<sup>20</sup>) For us the relevant question is not only *what kind of* approach or perspective anarchism is, but also, and more importantly, what it is a perspective *on* or approach *to*. Answering these questions obviously requires a greater degree of specificity than the trivial definition provides. To this end, there are six general definitions of philosophy that are worth our while to consider.

The first (hereafter “P<sub>1</sub>”) refers to a basic view of reality—that is, to a more or less comprehensive and internally coherent worldview or system of thought (as in “Marxist philosophy” or “Christian philosophy”).

The second (hereafter “P<sub>2</sub>”) refers to a more or less uniform way of understanding some particular dimension of reality (as in particular political philosophies, moral philosophies, metaphysical philosophies, epistemological philosophies, and so on).

The third (hereafter “P<sub>3</sub>”) refers to mode of inquiry or form of intellectual practice that uses rational methods to investigate “the most general or fundamental questions about the nature of reality and human life insofar as those problems are beyond the competence of the special sciences to raise or resolve.”<sup>21</sup>

The fourth (hereafter “P<sub>4</sub>”) refers to a particular tradition of intellectual practice or inquiry (in the sense of P<sub>3</sub>) defined by a more or less uniform subject matter and range of approaches (as in “Western philosophy” or “Eastern philosophy”).

The fifth (hereafter “P<sub>5</sub>”) refers to the philosophical study (in the sense of P<sub>3</sub>) of the theoretical basis of a particular mode of knowledge (as in “philosophy of science” or “philosophy of religion”) or the explicitly philosophical exploration (again, in the sense of P<sub>3</sub>) of issues arising within a particular domain of human experience (as in “political philosophy” or “moral philosophy”).

The sixth (hereafter “P<sub>6</sub>”) refers to a professional academic discipline that provides instruction and conducts scholarly research pertaining to philosophy in one or more of the senses described above.

20 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 7.

21 S. Duncan, *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion* (Philosophy Insights, 2007), 8.

These definitions highlight a basic distinction in conventional understandings of philosophy. As in the trivial case above,  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  characterize philosophy as a kind of “view” or “perspective,” whereas  $P_3$ ,  $P_4$ ,  $P_5$ , and  $P_6$  characterize it as a kind of intellectual “practice” or “activity.” (In other words,  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  presuppose a different generic definition of philosophy from  $P_3$ ,  $P_4$ ,  $P_5$ , and  $P_6$ .) Although the kind of activity or practice described in  $P_3$  may in some cases generate perspectives or views of the sort described in  $P_1$ , there may be ways of generating such perspectives or views that do not involve “philosophizing” in the sense described in  $P_3$ . The same is true of the kinds of perspectives or views described in  $P_2$  in relation to the modes of study and investigation described in  $P_5$  insofar as a view or perspective of this sort may or not be the product of explicitly philosophical inquiry.

### Definitions of Anarchism

As in the case of “philosophy,” it is not our intention here to prescribe how the term “anarchism” *ought* to be defined but rather to describe “its various uses, and ... the varying intentions with which it was used.”<sup>22</sup> Definitions of anarchism have emerged in a wide and diverse range of historical, political, social, and cultural contexts. Some have been formulated by self-identified anarchists, others by sympathetic writers and fellow travelers, still others by hostile critics. Some date from the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, others from the mid to late twentieth centuries, still others from the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Some have been articulated explicitly in texts of various kinds, while others are implicit in the political activities of individuals and groups. In seeking to understand such definitions, our chief interest lies in determining what particular actors, “writing at the time [they] did write for the audience [they] intended to address, could in practice have been intending to communicate” by means of them.<sup>23</sup> It remains an open question whether there is some one “determinate idea to which various writers contributed” or whether there is “only a variety of statements made by a variety of different agents with a variety of different intentions.”<sup>24</sup>

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22 Q. Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” in Q. Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85.

23 Ibid., 87–88.

24 Ibid., 85.

Generic definitions of anarchism, including those alluded to above, may be divided into two broad categories.<sup>25</sup> The first, which I call “intellectual” definitions, understand anarchism first and foremost in terms of its theoretical *content*—i.e., a set of distinctive beliefs, judgments, values, principles, ideals, and so on—and/or the intellectual *activities* and *practices* that give rise to this content—i.e., the methods and approaches it employs in critiquing existing political, social, and economic institutions; describing and justifying alternative forms of organization; critically engaging with other perspectives; and so on.<sup>26</sup> The second, which I call “practico-political” definitions, understand anarchism chiefly in terms of particular (non-intellectual) activities, practices, and practical objectives. Whereas definitions of the former sort pertain to how and what anarchists *qua* anarchists think, definitions of the latter sort are principally concerned with how they *act* and what they *do*.

Because intellectual definitions generally regard anarchism as a kind of *ideology*, *philosophy*, or *theory* (or as a group of related ideologies, theories, or philosophies, or as a broad ideological, philosophical, or theoretical tendency, orientation, or tradition), they are often favored by political philosophers and others who analyze political thought “in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions” and “concentrate on argument analysis of largely canonical texts.”<sup>27</sup> Practico-political definitions, in contrast, tend to regard anarchism first and foremost as a social and/or political *movement* (or as a group of interrelated political movements, or as a practical tendency or orientation within or across various political movements). As such, they are often favored by sociologists and others who analyze political movements by studying “institutions, organizations and social practices.”<sup>28</sup>

25 For a similar categorization scheme, see George Woodcock's *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Cleveland, Oh.: World Publishing Company, 1962).

26 Representative examples of this approach include Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*; McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*; Miller, *Anarchism*; and Ritter, *Anarchism: A Conceptual Analysis*. Cf. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive*, 4.

27 B. Franks, “Vanguards and Paternalism,” in Jun and Wahl, eds., *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, 100.

28 Ibid. In addition to the examples Franks cites, see also R. Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005); Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!*; D. Williams, “An Anarchist-Sociologist Research Program: Fertile Areas for Theoretical and Practical Research,” in Jun and Wahl, eds., *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, 243–266; D. Williams, “A Society in Revolt or Under Analysis? Investigating the Dialogue Between Nineteenth-Century Anarchists and Sociologists,” in *Without Borders or Limits: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Anarchist Studies*, eds. J. Meléndez-Badillo and N. Jun (Newcastle-on-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013), 3–36; D. Williams and J. Shantz,



The difference between the two, it should be noted, is largely a matter of emphasis rather than substance. In the first place, no one denies that “anarchism” refers, at least in part, to a revolutionary political movement that emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century and which still exists in various forms in the present. There is some disagreement as to when and how this movement developed;<sup>29</sup> what it sought to achieve;<sup>30</sup> whether it espoused a distinctive ideological or political-theoretical perspective (and, if so, what that perspective was);<sup>31</sup> and how it relates historically and ideologically to various contemporary political movements that have been described, or described themselves, as “anarchist.”<sup>32</sup> That said, the fact that there is, or at least has

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“Defining an Anarchist Sociology: A Long Anticipated Marriage,” *Theory in Action* 4, no. 4 (2011): 9–30; D. Williams and J. Shantz, *Anarchy and Society: Reflections on Anarchist Sociology* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

- 29 See, e.g., M. Schmidt and L. van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2009), which argues that anarchism developed out of the First International Workingmen’s Association in the 1860s. Most other writers cite earlier dates. For a representative example, see P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*.
- 30 See, e.g., E. Goldman, “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For,” in *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 47–67; Kropotkin, “Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal,” 123–124; P. Latouche, *Anarchy! An Authentic Exposition of the Methods of Anarchists and the Aims of Anarchism* (London: Everett and Company, 1908); D. Novak, “Anarchism in the History of Political Thought,” in Hoffman, *Anarchism as Political Philosophy*, 20–33, esp. 28–29; Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 4; Ritter, *Anarchism: A Conceptual Analysis*, chapter 2; and E. Steinle, *The True Aim of Anarchism* (E.H. Fulton, 1896).
- 31 See, e.g., Amster, *Anarchism Today*, 88; L. Susan Brown, *The Politics of Individualism: Liberalism, Liberal Feminism, and Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 2; B. Franks, “Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy,” in Kinna, ed., *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, 62; R. Leach, *Political Ideology in Britain* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), xi; McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 53; C. Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2010), 17–28; S. Newman, *The Politics of Postanarchism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); S. Sheehan, *Anarchism* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 78–79; Ritter, *Anarchism a Conceptual Analysis*, introduction; Sartwell, *Against the State*, 13; and E.V. Zenker, *Anarchism: A Criticism and History of the Anarchist Theory* (London: Putnam’s, 1897), chapter 1.
- 32 See, e.g., R. Kinna, “Introduction,” in Kinna, ed., *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, 16–22. See also D. Apter, “The Old Anarchism and the New—Some Comments,” in Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 1–13; K. Ferguson, “Toward a New Anarchism,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 7, no. 1 (1973): 39–57; Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!*, 21–27; D. Graeber, “New Anarchism,” in *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* ed. T. Mertes (London: Verso, 2004), 202–215; S. Hirsch and L. van der Walt, “Final Reflections: The Vicissitudes of Anarchist and Syndicalist Trajectories, 1940–Present,” in *Anarchism and*

been, such a thing as an anarchist political movement (or a group of anarchist political movements, or an anarchist tendency or orientation within or across various political movements) is scarcely in dispute.

So, too, few would claim that there is or could be an anarchist political movement that is not founded in some way on a particular perspective or range of perspectives—more specifically, on a particular set of underlying beliefs, ideas, values, principles, and/or commitments.<sup>33</sup> Robert Graham warns against the tendency to define anarchism solely in terms of “a historically-embodied movement or movements,” as this approach conflates “anarchism as a body of ideas with anarchism as a movement.”<sup>34</sup> Even if anarchism is chiefly regarded as a political movement that is distinguished from other movements on the basis of its practices or practical tendencies, one may still ask what ends anarchists hope to achieve through these practices, why they choose these particular practices and ends over others, and so on. One obvious answer to these sorts of questions is, again, that what anarchists *do* is at least a partial function of what anarchists *believe*—in other words, that anarchist *practice* is related in non-trivial ways to anarchist *thought*. (Since we are mainly concerned with the relationship between anarchism and philosophy, and since all six definitions enumerated in the previous section define philosophy in terms of intellectual content or activity, we will not consider practico-practical definitions of anarchism in any significant detail here—although we will briefly revisit the relationship of anarchist thought and anarchist political activity in the conclusion.)

All of this being said, even those who define anarchism in intellectual terms disagree amongst themselves as to how anarchist thought as such should be characterized. This disagreement bespeaks a more basic tension concerning the role that reason and intellectual analysis plays (or ought to play) in anarchist politics. Though anarchists of all stripes have generally agreed that “anarchism owes little to the writings of the ‘intellectual,’”<sup>35</sup> many have considered it important to defend anarchism against the sorts of charges and accusations

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*Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940*, eds. S. Hirsch and L. van der Walt (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 398–400; R. Kinna, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 22–23; B. Morris, “Reflections on the New Anarchism,” in *Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism*, 133–148; T. Perlin, “The Recurrence of Defiance,” in *Contemporary Anarchism*; and G. Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists* (Kingston, On.: Quarry Press, 1992), 40–58.

33 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 36.

34 R. Graham, *We Do Not Fear Anarchy—We Invoke It: The First International and the Origins of the Anarchist Movement* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2015), 2.

35 S. Christie and A. Meltzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2000), 9.

enumerated in the preface by attempting to demonstrate that it is “coherent” (i.e., that its substantive claims are mutually consistent) and “rational” (i.e., that its substantive claims may be justified on purely rational grounds). However, some have gone a step further by portraying anarchism as an explicitly “scientific”<sup>36</sup> worldview “anchor[ed] firmly and irretrievably in Enlightenment rationalism.”<sup>37</sup> This is particularly true of Kropotkin and other “classical” anarchists for whom anarchism employs the methods “of the exact natural sciences” to construct “a mechanical explanation of all phenomena ... including ... the life of human societies and their economic, political, and moral problems”<sup>38</sup> or “to construct a synthetic philosophy comprehending in one generalization all ... of Nature.”<sup>39</sup> In associating anarchism with notions of “self-regulating natural mechanisms, relations and processes that are rational and that, if left alone, allow a more harmonious social order to emerge,”<sup>40</sup> Kropotkin and his ilk were not content to demonstrate that it is intellectually credible (insofar as it is supported by or, at the very least, compatible with reason); rather, they were explicitly intent upon characterizing anarchism as a rationalist ideology that places foremost emphasis on reason and scientific analysis in the formulation and justification of its beliefs, ideas, principles, and commitments.

Others have claimed that anarchism rejects “rationalist discourses of Enlightenment humanism” including “essentialist notions of the rational human subject and ... positivistic faith in science and objective historical laws.”<sup>41</sup> For those who defend “non-rationalist” perspectives of this sort, anarchism is neither solely nor even chiefly a matter of rational deliberation, theoretical analysis, or “intellectual awareness”<sup>42</sup> more generally, but of non-rational sensibilities,

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36 Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 69.

37 G. Ciccariello-Maher, “An Anarchism That is Not Anarchism: Notes Toward a Critique of Anarchist Imperialism,” in *How Not to be Governed: Readings and Interpretations from a Critical Anarchist Left*, eds. J. Casa Klausen and J. Martel (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2011), 20.

38 P. Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1908), 53, 135–136; cf. Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 25, 41.

39 Ibid.

40 Newman, *The Politics of Postanarchism*, 37.

41 Ibid., 6. Representative postanarchist texts include L. Call, *Postmodern Anarchism* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002); R. Day, *Gramsci is Dead*; T. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); and S. Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001). See also D. Rousselle and S. Evren, eds., *Postanarchism: A Reader* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

42 Feral Faun, *Feral Revolution* (n.d.), <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/feral-faun-essays>.

convictions, aspirations, and ideals. According to this view, anarchist beliefs, ideas, principles, and commitments reflect underlying “psychological and temperamental attitudes”<sup>43</sup> or “mood[s],”<sup>44</sup> which means that anarchist political movements are not so much applications of a “doctrine”<sup>45</sup> or “a body of theory”<sup>46</sup> as they are expressions of “an attitude, or perhaps one might even say a faith: the rejection of certain types of social relations, the confidence that certain others would be much better ones on which to build a livable society, the belief that such a society could actually exist.”<sup>47</sup> In this way, anarchism is closer to being “a species of Romanticism”<sup>48</sup> than a “wayward child of the Enlightenment”<sup>49</sup> or the “odd man out”<sup>50</sup> in a broader set of Enlightenment ideologies.

We must avoid the temptation to overstate the difference between rationalist and non-rationalist interpretations. An emphasis on ideas, or on the role that intellectual analysis plays in the formulation and justification of these ideas, does not necessarily entail a commitment to a particular theoretical perspective, let alone a de-emphasis on practices or on the role that psychological or emotional factors play in motivating and inspiring these practices. Nor does calling attention to the limitations of intellectual analysis necessarily entail a blanket opposition to science, philosophy, and related discourses. As Graeber remarks:

Anarchism is ... a project, which sets out to begin creating the institutions of a new society “within the shell of the old,” to expose, subvert, and undermine structures of domination but always, while doing so, proceeding in a democratic fashion, a manner which itself demonstrates those structures are unnecessary. Clearly any such project has need of the tools of intellectual analysis and understanding.<sup>51</sup>

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43 Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 260.

44 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 663. Representative texts include H. Bey, *T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (New York: Autonomedia, 2003); B. Black, *Anarchy After Leftism* (Columbia, Mo: C.A.L. Press, 1997); CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective, *Days of War, Nights of Love* (Atlanta: CrimethInc. Free Press, 2001); Nadia C., “Your Politics Are Boring As Fuck” (n.d.), <http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/selected/asfuck.php>.

45 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 663.

46 Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 4.

47 Ibid.

48 Weir, *Anarchy and Culture* 12, 14.

49 J. Shantz, *A Creative Passion: Anarchism and Culture* (Newcastle-on-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 24.

50 Weir, *Anarchy and Culture*, 12.

51 Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 7.

At the same time, he continues, anarchist intellectuals must “reject self-consciously any trace of vanguardism” and avoid taking on the role of “an elite that can arrive at the correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow.”<sup>52</sup>

Although neither perspective categorically denies that rational deliberation and reflection are important to anarchist thought, and although both emphasize the centrality of practice, non-rationalist perspectives understand anarchism in terms of sensibilities, convictions, aspirations, or ideals that emerge organically from concrete, lived experience rather than considered rational deliberation or judgment. It is only *after* such sensibilities, convictions, aspirations, or ideals come into being at the level of practice that they are subjected to intellectual analysis, and even then the analysis in question is largely concerned with strategy or tactics (as Graeber puts it, a “discourse about revolutionary practice”<sup>53</sup>) rather than “high theory.” In other words, it is not anarchist thought itself that is the product of intellectual analysis, but rather the strategic and tactical discourses that are formulated in response to that thought. This explains, in turn, why non-rationalist accounts have generally been uninterested in arguing for anarchism or providing rational justification for it more generally.

For rationalists like Kropotkin, there is no reason in principle why the ideas that emerge organically from the concrete, lived experience of political struggle should be regarded as “non-rational” in nature. Such ideas are “rational” just in case they are justified by sufficient reasons (and so can be explicated and justified in terms of those reasons), and this is true regardless of *how* those ideas come about.<sup>54</sup> Although some who defend non-rationalist perspectives may agree that anarchist ideas are “rational” in this sense, they do not necessarily consider this to be an important consideration. After all, perspectives of this sort are not just claiming that anarchist ideas emerge from non-rational sources, but that it is a matter of indifference whether anarchist ideas qualify as rational in the first place.

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52 Ibid., 11.

53 Ibid., 6.

54 It may be that ideas that are formulated on the basis of rational deliberation are more likely to be rational than ideas that are formulated on the basis of feelings, intuitions, or instincts. But this is mostly irrelevant as far as the present discussion is concerned. Whether X is a rational thing to believe or not depends solely on whether there are good reasons to believe that X is true. The fact that I happen to believe X on the basis of a feeling rather than a consideration of the reasons for believing X may indicate that my belief-forming process is non-rational, but it doesn't necessarily mean that X itself is an irrational thing to believe.

In short, while intellectual definitions of anarchism uniformly emphasize anarchist *thought*, this does not entail a uniform understanding of the *mechanisms* by which this thought is generated. The same is generally true with regard to characterizing the general kind of which anarchist thought is a particular instance. Although some definitions use terms like “ideology,” “theory,” and “philosophy” interchangeably, many more hold them as distinct. We must therefore differentiate those that describe anarchism as a “philosophy” from those that describe it as a “theory,” an “ideology,” or something else entirely. We must also draw a distinction between those that understand anarchism as a *single* ideology, theory, or philosophy and those that see it as as a broad philosophical, ideological, or theoretical tendency, orientation, or tradition comprised of otherwise diverse elements.

### Anarchism as Political Ideology

In most cases, “ideology” is defined as a “consistent set of ideas [or] central assumptions”<sup>55</sup> (or as a “sheaf of overlapping [ideas or assumptions] assembled around a core characterization”<sup>56</sup>) that pertain to the particular dimension of human reality known as “politics” or “the political.” Although the meaning of the term “political” is itself disputed, it is generally understood to refer to the social dimension of human existence or, more specifically, to the various ways that human beings constitute (or are capable of constituting) themselves as social creatures. According to Ponton and Gill, for example, politics may be defined as “the way in which we understand and order our social affairs, especially in relation to the allocation of scarce resources, the principles underlying this, and the means by which some people or groups acquire and maintain greater control over the situation than others.”<sup>57</sup>

Whereas “political” activity or practice refers to actual or hypothetical constitutions of the social domain itself, “political” discourse and thought refer to various ways of speaking and thinking about this domain as well as the the fundamental issues to which it gives rise—e.g., “the exercise of power ... the public allocation of things that are valued ... the resolution of conflict ... the competition among groups and individuals pursuing their interests ... [and] the determination of who gets what, when, and how.”<sup>58</sup> Understood in this way, political

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55 Miller, *Anarchism*, 3.

56 Sylvan, “Anarchism,” 233.

57 G. Ponton and P. Gill, *Introduction to Politics* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982), 5–6.

58 J. Danziger, *Understanding the Political World* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1991), 5.

thought is a broad category that “refers to thinking about politics at any level of conceptualization and articulation.”<sup>59</sup> As such, it encompasses “the political speculations of a whole community, over a certain period” including its “leaders, statesmen, commentators, writers, poets, publicists, social reformers, litterateurs, and the like” as expressed in “policies, programs, plans, activities, organizations, constitutions, etc.”<sup>60</sup>

Although anarchism is often defined as an “ideology” in the generic sense described above, there is considerable disagreement regarding the particular “ideas” or “assumptions” that distinguish it from other ideologies. As David Miller writes:

Of course an ideology is never a fully coherent doctrine; every ideology is open-ended, capable of being developed in different directions, and therefore of generating contradictory propositions. But generally speaking we can at least find a coherent core, a consistent set of ideas which is shared by all those who embrace the ideology in question ... It is by no means clear that we can find such a set of core assumptions in the case of anarchism. We must [therefore] face the possibility that anarchism is not really *an* ideology, but rather the point of intersection of several ideologies.<sup>61</sup>

Here Miller seems to be suggesting that the “ideas” and “assumptions” that constitute ideologies are first-order claims, assertions, or propositions. As Paul McLaughlin notes, many scholars have taken it for granted that such “ideas” and “assumptions,” if they exist, are to be found in the writings of individuals who have been identified, or identified themselves, as “anarchists.” Although McLaughlin seems to agree with Miller in defining ideologies as “collections of particular beliefs articulated in particular texts and expressed in particular activities,” he nonetheless rejects the notion that ideologies can be reduced to “collections of individuals.”<sup>62</sup> When anarchism is approached in this way, he writes:

[I]t is not the least bit surprising that scholars [who employ it] conclude that it is an inconsistent, contradictory, or incoherent ideology. Individuals

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59 M. Freeden, “Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy,” in *Handbook of Political Theory*, eds. G. Gaus and C. Kukathas (London: SAGE, 2004), 6.

60 J.C. Johari, *Contemporary Political Theory* (New Delhi: Stirling Publishers, 2006), 17–18.

61 Miller, *Anarchism*, 3.

62 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 15.

themselves change and also change their minds. We can hardly expect them to be consistent—say “consistently anarchist”—throughout a lifetime and a body of work ... [E]vading [the] basic challenge of ideological inquiry by simply identifying an ideology with a collection of individuals—and, once again, with every aspect of their lives and thought—is indolent and uninformative.<sup>63</sup>

As McLaughlin himself admits, however, “anarchism has been defined in numerous ways”<sup>64</sup> (for example, as “the rejection of rule, of government, of the state, of authority, or of domination,” as “a theory of voluntary association, of decentralization, or federalism, of freedom...”<sup>65</sup> and so on), and “locating or specifying the [ideas and assumptions] that characterize [it] is a challenge” even when we focus on the extent to which [they] “have gained expression in ... activities” rather than the writings of individuals.<sup>66</sup>

A much more useful approach is provided by Michael Freeden, who defines ideologies in general as complex “clusters” or “composites” of decontested political *concepts* “with a variety of internal combinations”<sup>67</sup> (we will refer to this as Freeden’s “weak” definition of ideology). For Freeden—unlike for Miller and McLaughlin—ideologies are not constituted by particular claims, assertions, or propositions but by particular political *concepts* “characterized by a morphology,”<sup>68</sup> i.e., an inner structure that organizes and arranges those concepts in particular ways and, in so doing, removes them “from contest by attempting to assign them a clear meaning.”<sup>69</sup> The structure of an ideology is determined by the particular ways it decontests the concepts it contains; the decontested meanings assigned to these concepts are determined in turn by how they are organized and arranged within the ideology, as well as the historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts within which the ideology itself is situated.<sup>70</sup>

Ideologies assign fixed meanings and degrees of relative significance to concepts by means of two basic operations. The first involves identifying, defining,

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63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., 25.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid., 20.

67 M. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 88.

68 Ibid., 77.

69 M. Freeden, *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 59.

70 Ibid., 54, 76–77.



and organizing their “micro-components”—i.e., the particular referents that specify what they are concepts *of*.<sup>71</sup> Every concept has several possible micro-components, each of which, in turn, has many possible meanings and degrees of relative significance within the overall concept. This allows for “diverse conceptions of any concept”<sup>72</sup> and an “infinite variety” of “conceptual permutations” within “the ideational boundaries ... that anchor [them] and secure [their] components.”<sup>73</sup> The second, in contrast involves arranging concepts within a hierarchy of “core,” “adjacent,” and “peripheral” elements as well as determining their relative significance among other concepts of the same type.<sup>74</sup>

The core concepts of a particular ideology are distinguished by their “long-term durability” and are “present in all known cases of the ideology in question.”<sup>75</sup> As such, “they are indispensable to holding the ideology together, and are consequently accorded preponderance in shaping that ideology’s ideational content.”<sup>76</sup> Adjacent concepts, in contrast, “are second-ranking in the pervasiveness and breadth of meanings they impart to the ideology in which they are located. They do not appear in all its instances, but are crucial to finessing the core and anchoring it ... into a more determinate and decontested semantic field.”<sup>77</sup> Lastly there are peripheral concepts, which are “more marginal and generally more ephemeral concepts that change at a faster pace diachronically and culturally.”<sup>78</sup> Each of these categories, moreover, has an internal hierarchy that accords different degrees of “proportional weight”<sup>79</sup> to the concepts they comprise.

Both operations can be applied in a variety of different ways. In some cases these differences are a function of the identification, definition, and organization of micro-components within the concepts themselves. In others, they are a function of the presence or absence of other concepts; of the relative position of concepts within the morphology; or of the different levels of proportional weight accorded to concepts that occupy the same relative position in the morphology. Although Freeden’s approach recognizes that ideologies

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71 M. Freeden, “The Morphological Analysis of Ideology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. M. Freeden, L. Tower Sargent, and M. Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 124–125.

72 Ibid., 124.

73 Ibid., 126, 128, 125.

74 Ibid., 125.

75 Ibid., 125–126.

76 Ibid., 126.

77 Ibid., 125.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

have core elements that are “indispensable to holding [them] together, and are consequently accorded preponderance in shaping [their] ideational content,”<sup>80</sup> it avoids defining ideologies strictly in terms of these (or any other) concepts. Its goal as such is not only to identify the core concepts of ideological morphologies but also, and more importantly, to investigate the various “conceptual permutations” they contain. Because these are virtually unlimited, ideologies have “the potential for infinite variety and alteration” and, for this reason, are capable of expressing themselves in a wide and diverse range of manifestations.<sup>81</sup> This is true even of core concepts, the meanings of which can vary enormously from one particular “manifestation” of a given ideology to the next.<sup>82</sup> Ideologies that recognize the same core concepts can be and often are quite different from one another; even a single ideological tradition can include a variety of distinct tendencies.

As such, the question of whether anarchism is characterized by a set of core propositions is largely irrelevant to its identification as an ideology. What matters, on the contrary, is that it involves a stable “cluster” of concepts as well as a particular *morphology*—that is, a particular way of organizing and arranging concepts so as to accord them specific meanings and degrees of significance. Although there is no question that anarchist ideas are “fluid and constantly evolving” and that their “central content ... changes from one generation to another ... against the background of the movements and culture in and by which they are expressed,”<sup>83</sup> different tendencies within anarchism nonetheless “have largely similar morphologies,”<sup>84</sup> meaning that they tend to affirm the same basic set of core concepts even though “[these] are expressed in different ways, depending on context.”<sup>85</sup> Were this not the case, it would be difficult to account for the ubiquitous tendency to regard anarchism as a distinctive political perspective, let alone the fact that conventional treatments of anarchism consistently highlight particular concepts (e.g., freedom, anti-statism, anti-capitalism, prefiguration, etc.) rather than others. This suggests that anarchism qualifies as an ideology at least according to Freeden’s “weak” definition.

According to (what we will call) Freeden’s “strong” definition, ideologies are not simply conceptual assemblages but “clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes usually held by identifiable groups that provide directives,

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80 Ibid., 126.

81 Ibid., 128, 126.

82 Ibid., 125.

83 Gordon, *Anarchy Alive*, 4.

84 Franks, “Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy,” 63.

85 Ibid.

even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavour to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community.”<sup>86</sup> Unlike the “weak” definition, the “strong” definition encompasses ideas *as well as* the concrete forms of political activity they animate, and this (along with additional characteristics to be discussed below) serves to distinguish ideologies from less explicitly practice-oriented forms of political thought such as political philosophy or political theory. As we have already noted, anarchism may be understood as a “*movement* composed of dense networks of individuals, affinity groups and collectives which communicate and coordinate intensively, sometimes across the globe, and generate innumerable direct actions and sustained projects.”<sup>87</sup> It may also be understood as an “intricate *political culture*”—that is, “a family of shared orientations for doing and talking about politics, and to living everyday life”—that animates these networks and infuses them with content.”<sup>88</sup> Insofar as the “major features” of this culture (e.g., “a shared repertoire of political action based on direct action, building grassroots alternatives, community outreach and confrontation; shared forms of organizing ...; broader cultural expression in areas as diverse as art, music, dress and diet ...; [and] shared political language that emphasises resistance to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and more generally to hierarchy and domination”<sup>89</sup>) follow straightforwardly from the conceptual morphology described above, it is clear that anarchism qualifies as an ideology in this stronger sense as well.

All of this being said, it remains an open question whether anarchism is *only* a political ideology. Although it is certainly possible that ideology constitutes an altogether distinct category of political thought, it may just as well be a general kind of which political theories or political philosophies are particular instances—in which case anarchism might qualify as a political theory, a political philosophy, or some other species of political thought *as well as* an ideology. Indeed, even if political theory or political philosophy are entirely distinct from ideology, it is possible that anarchism is related to them in non-trivial ways. We will consider each of these possibilities below.

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86 Freedon, “Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy,” 6.

87 Ibid., 3.

88 Gordon, *Anarchy Alive*, 4.

89 Ibid., 3–4.

## Anarchism as Political Theory

The term “political theory” is typically used in two senses. The first refers to a form of political thought that explores fundamental political questions, problems, and issues. As Terence Ball writes:

So long as people live together in communities, fundamental questions—“theoretical” ones, if you like—will inevitably arise. No community can long exist without addressing and answering, at least provisionally, questions of [this] sort. [These include] questions about justice and fairness in the distribution of duties and resources.... about offices and authority ... about grounds and justification ... about punishment ... about the limits and extent of obligation ... [in short] questions ... that any civilized community, or at any rate its most reflective members, must address and attempt to answer.<sup>90</sup>

Whereas other forms of political thought are concerned with questions that emerge in specific political contexts (e.g., about public policy), political theory deals with questions that are taken to be universally applicable in any and all “civilized communities.” For this reason, it tends to be more speculative and abstract than the former.

As Anthony Quinton notes, the distinction between this first sense of political theory and similarly abstract or speculative modes of political thought like political philosophy “is fine, to the point, indeed, of being barely discernible.”<sup>91</sup> Insofar as the former is identified as a subfield of political science, it “is more closely allied with empirical methodologies and less inclined toward the normative claims of humanities scholars (although political theorists are more normative and ‘philosophical’ than other scholars in the social sciences).”<sup>92</sup> In practice, this is generally taken to mean that political theory is both explanatory and predictive *as well as* normative in character—in other words, that it is concerned with describing or explaining fundamental political phenomena as well as prescribing what ought to be the case ideally. This implies that political philosophy is coextensive with normative political theory, whereas

90 T. Ball, “Whither Political Theory?” in *Political Science: Looking to the Future*, vol. 1, ed. W. Crotty (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 60.

91 A. Quinton, “Political Philosophy,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Philosophy*, ed. A. Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 275.

92 A. Fiala, Introduction to *The Bloomsbury Companion to Political Philosophy*, ed. A. Fiala (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 12.

political theory more broadly encompasses non-normative questions and non-philosophical methods. Such a distinction is largely tendentious, however, since canonical works of political philosophy frequently involve descriptive or explanatory analyses rooted in the use of empirical methodologies. For our purposes, it is just as well to regard political theory in this first sense as equivalent to political philosophy (about which more below).

The second sense refers to a “subdiscipline of political science” which studies significant “texts, arguments, and discourses” in the history of political theorizing.<sup>93</sup> Understood in this way, political theory involves a “historical narrative [or] a sequenced story that examine[s] the ways in which a number of outstanding individuals such as Aristotle, Hobbes or Rousseau applied their wisdom” to particular political issues, problems, and questions.<sup>94</sup> Its foremost objective, in other words, is to interpret and/or critically evaluate the political thought of particular thinkers and writers in terms of the particular issues with which they are concerned; the particular methods they employ in investigating these issues (whether “philosophical, historical, economic, psychological, sociological, theological, or anthropological”<sup>95</sup>); and the particular conclusions at which they arrive. Although students of this sort of political theory do not deny the existence of significant commonalities among otherwise distinct political perspectives—indeed, the notion of political-theoretical “schools,” “movements,” “tendencies,” and the like is articulated precisely on the basis of such commonalities—they are keen to emphasize the distinctiveness of individual thinkers and, by extension, the various ways in which their political ideas differ.

The same critique that McLaughlin leveled against the “individualistic approach” to ideology would seem to apply here as well. Although conventional accounts of anarchism tend to characterize it as “the brainchild of certain nineteenth-century thinkers—Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, etc.” these “‘founding figures’ did not think of themselves as having invented anything particularly new.”<sup>96</sup> Like other anarchists, on the contrary, they tended to understand anarchism as a product of the combined efforts of countless “anonymous individuals who played active roles in the workers’ movement of the nineteenth century” as well as the “common people [who practiced] anarchism without being aware of it or with no previous knowledge of the

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93 Freedon, “Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy,” 3.

94 Ibid.

95 Johari, *Contemporary Political Theory*, 20.

96 Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 3.

word *anarchism*.”<sup>97</sup> Even the rationalist Kropotkin insisted that anarchism was “born *among the people*.”<sup>98</sup> This suggests that anarchist ideas evolved from the real-world political struggles of “activists” rather than the deliberations of a small group of intellectuals or theoreticians—in which case anarchism does not qualify as a “political theory” in the second sense described above. This is not to say that individual figures like Proudhon and Bakunin were not political theorists or that their work cannot be studied as political theory, but only that anarchism itself is not reducible to the political theory of any one individual.

### Anarchism as Philosophy (Political and Otherwise)

As we noted at the outset, many notable anarchists (as well as commentators on anarchism) have described anarchism as a “philosophy.” To cite just a few examples:

[Anarchism] is the philosophy of the sovereignty of the individual.<sup>99</sup>

Anarchism—The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.<sup>100</sup>

Anarchism is the only philosophy which brings to man the consciousness of himself.<sup>101</sup>

The liberation of man from economic exploitation and from intellectual and political oppression ... finds its finest expression in the philosophy of anarchism...<sup>102</sup>

Anarchism is that political philosophy which advocates the maximization of individual responsibility and the reduction of concentrated power.<sup>103</sup>

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97 Z. Vodovnik, *A Living Spirit of Revolt: The Infrapolitics of Anarchism* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2013), 7.

98 Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 146.

99 Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 67.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid., 50.

102 Rocker, *Anarchosyndicalism*, 37.

103 A. Comfort, Preface to H. Barclay, *People Without Government: An Anthropology of Anarchy* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1990), 7.

Anarchism is a philosophy based on the premise that men need freedom in order to solve urgent social problems, and begin to realize their potentialities for happiness and creativity.<sup>104</sup>

Anarchism is a philosophy of freedom. It is a body of revolutionary ideas which reconciles, as no other revolutionary concept does, the necessity for individual freedom with the demands of society. It is a commune-ist philosophy which starts from the individual and works upwards, instead of starting from the State and working downwards.<sup>105</sup>

Anarchism is a philosophy in its own right. Although as a social movement it has developed a wide variety of strands from extreme individualism to communism, all anarchists share certain common concerns.<sup>106</sup>

Anarchism is a political philosophy in the authentic sense: it poses the fundamental ethical question of political legitimacy. It is not content with disinterested description of the political order but seeks, from the standpoint of “justice,” to assess the legitimacy of this order and its alternatives.<sup>107</sup>

Anarchism is a political philosophy concerning any form of non-authoritarian political organization dealing with local and daily life.<sup>108</sup>

Anarchism is a political philosophy ... favoring social order based on voluntary association and rejecting the legitimacy of the state.<sup>109</sup>

These examples make clear that those who describe anarchism as a “philosophy” typically mean “political philosophy.” Generally speaking, this refers either to a more or less uniform way of understanding the particular dimension of reality known as “politics” or “the political” (as in  $P_2$ ), or else to an intellectual practice or mode of inquiry that philosophically explores this dimension of reality (as in  $P_5$ )—that is, by means of “rational methods” such as *argumentation* (the justification of propositions by means of deductive and/or inductive reasoning) and *analysis* (the critical evaluation of propositions by means of the same). Before considering the extent to which anarchism qualifies as a political philosophy in either or both of these senses, let us briefly examine its relation to the other definitions of philosophy outlined previously.

104 D. Wieck, “Essentials of Anarchism,” in Hoffman, ed., *Anarchism as Political Philosophy*, 97.

105 Christopher, et al., “The Relevance of Anarchism,” 70.

106 Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 36.

107 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 104.

108 Depuis-Déri, “Anarchy in Political Philosophy,” 19.

109 Long, “Anarchism,” 217.

The notion that anarchism qualifies as an instance of  $P_1$  is dubious. Anarchists past and present have refused to characterize anarchism as a fixed, comprehensive, and self-contained system of thought<sup>110</sup>; on the contrary, they have insisted that it “recognizes only the relative significance of ideas, institutions, and social forms.”<sup>111</sup> and have explicitly denied that it is “necessarily linked to any [one] philosophical system,”<sup>112</sup> as when Emma Goldman argues that anarchism “leaves posterity free to develop its own particular systems, in harmony with its needs.”<sup>113</sup> Identifying anarchism with  $P_3$  is problematic for two related but distinct reasons. In the first place, anarchism has never understood itself as an attempt to answer “the most general or fundamental questions about the nature of reality and human life”<sup>114</sup>; it is not “a metaphysics, cosmology, ecology, or spirituality ... an ontology, philosophy of history, ethics, economics, or positive political program.”<sup>115</sup> In the second place, anarchism as such is not committed to any particular mode of inquiry or form of intellectual practice, rational or otherwise; as Goldman says, it does not seek to “impose an iron-clad program or method.”<sup>116</sup>

As we have already seen, the role that such modes of inquiry play in anarchist thought is a matter of dispute. Feral Faun writes, for example, that anarchism emerges not from rational analysis but from “the energy of insurgent desire,”<sup>117</sup> seeking after “the revitalization of desire as a creative impulse” and “the refusal to let utility and effectiveness dominate over enjoyment, playfulness, experimentation and poetic living.”<sup>118</sup> Giovanni Baldelli makes a similar point:

Anarchism is not a philosophy ... Anarchism must rely on fundamental principles that are the result of an act of choice and are operative as an act of faith, regardless of whether they may be fitted into one philosophical system or another and whether they may have received rational and even scientific support.<sup>119</sup>

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110 Rocker, *Anarchosyndicalism*, 31.

111 Ibid.

112 Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 19.

113 Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 49.

114 Duncan, *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, 8.

115 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 9.

116 Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 49.

117 Feral Faun, “Radical Theory: A Wrecking Ball for Ivory Towers,” *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* 38 (Fall 1993): 53.

118 W. Landstreicher, “Desire Armed: Anarchy and the Creative Impulse” (n.d.), <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/wolfi-landstreicher-desire-armed>.

119 Baldelli, *Social Anarchism*, 2.



So, too, Alfredo Bonanno: “Anarchism is not a political theory. It is a way of conceiving life, and life ... is not something definitive.”<sup>120</sup> For defenders of these sorts of perspectives, “there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but there is a continual reversal of theory into action and action into theory.”<sup>121</sup> As Graeber puts it, “Anarchists like to distinguish themselves by what they do, and how they organize themselves to go about doing it ... [They] have never been much interested in broad philosophical or strategic questions.”<sup>122</sup> None of this is to say, again, that anarchism explicitly *disclaims* rational inquiry or analysis—only that anarchist thought as such is not uniformly committed to any particular method, rational or otherwise.

It will be recalled that  $P_4$  refers to a particular tradition of intellectual practice or inquiry (in the sense of  $P_3$ ) defined by a more or less uniform subject matter and range of approaches (as in “Western philosophy” or “Eastern philosophy”). Although anarchism does not qualify as an instance of  $P_4$  in the strict sense, it is certainly possible to situate anarchist thought in relation to various philosophical traditions of this sort—indeed, this is precisely what many of the chapters in this volume aim to do.<sup>123</sup> Even if Schmidt and van der Walt are right to argue that anarchism is “a product of the capitalist world and the working class it created”<sup>124</sup>—or, more controversially, that it has no existence prior to Bakunin and the First International<sup>125</sup>—no one can deny that anarchists have critically engaged with other thinkers, perspectives, and traditions and that anarchism itself has been influenced by a wide range of political, intellectual, and cultural movements (e.g., the Renaissance and the Reformation,<sup>126</sup>

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120 A. Bonanno, *The Anarchist Tension*, trans. J. Weir (London: Elephant Editions, 1996), 4.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid., 5.

123 See, for example, Christoyannopoulos' and Apps' contribution to this volume, which provides a comprehensive overview of anarchism's relationship with various religious traditions. Although none of the contributors deal explicitly with the relationship of anarchism to classical Greek and Roman thought, other scholars have pursued such lines of inquiry. See, for example, Donald Dudley, *A History of Cynicism* (London: Methuen, 1974), esp. 211–212; and D. Keyt, “Aristotle and the Ancient Roots of Anarchism,” *Topoi* 15 (1996): 129–142.

124 Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 96.

125 Ibid., 34.

126 P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2009), 138ff; P. Kropotkin, *Two Essays: Anarchism and Anarchist Cominunism, Its Basis and Principles* (London: Freedom Press, 1993), 11, 20; M. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, trans. M. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40.

the Enlightenment,<sup>127</sup> the French Revolution,<sup>128</sup> Left Hegelianism,<sup>129</sup> Comtean positivism,<sup>130</sup> and Darwinism,<sup>131</sup> *inter alia*.) While none of this establishes that anarchist thought *belongs* to a particular philosophical tradition, it at least provides evidence of a longstanding discursive relationship between anarchism and philosophy.

As was noted in the preface, even a cursory examination of the scholarly literature of the past fifty years reveals that academic philosophers have had precious little interest in, or regard for, anarchism under any description, while the few who have bothered to discuss it have almost invariably belittled or misrepresented it.<sup>132</sup> One notable exception to this general rule is “postanarchism”—also known as “poststructuralist anarchism” or “postmodern anarchism”—a recent current in anarchist political theory associated most prominently with Todd May, Lewis Call, and Saul Newman. At the highest level of generality, postanarchism urges “the adoption into anarchism of poststructural theory to enrich and enliven existing practices.”<sup>133</sup> Although it is extremely critical of certain aspects of classical anarchist thought—and although it has been subject to its fair share of criticism in turn—postanarchism nonetheless sees itself as “self-consciously engaged with and responding to” the broader anarchist tradition.<sup>134</sup>

The same is not true of other philosophical currents that have been described, or have described themselves, as “anarchist”—most notably the “philosophical anarchism ... associated with the work of Robert Paul Wolff and others from the 1970s to the present.”<sup>135</sup> In this context, the term “anarchism” refers to “principled skepticism toward the legitimacy and authority of states”; as such, it functions as little more than “an abstract descriptor

127 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 105–109.

128 P. Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989), 1, 15.

129 McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 111–116.

130 See Alex Prichard’s and Pabo Abufom Silva’s contribution to this volume.

131 See Brian Morris’ contribution to this volume.

132 For a list of representative exceptions, see N. Jun, “On Philosophical Anarchism,” *Radical Philosophy Review* 19, no. 3 (2016): note 5.

133 B. Franks, “Postanarchisms: A Critical Assessment,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12, no. 2 (2007): 127.

134 N. Jun and M. Adams, “Political Theory and History: The Case of Anarchism,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 20, no. 3 (2015): 247. The literature on postanarchism is extensive. For an excellent overview of postanarchism and its critics, see Franks, “Postanarchisms: A Critical Assessment.”

135 P. McLaughlin, “In Defense of Philosophical Anarchism,” in *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, eds. B. Franks and M. Wilson (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 15.

used by academic philosophers to position themselves within philosophical debates.<sup>136</sup> Beyond this, philosophical anarchism has proven altogether oblivious to and uninterested in the broader anarchist tradition and has consistently failed to engage with the social, political, and cultural history of the anarchist movement.<sup>137</sup>

It is an open question whether and to what extent postanarchism has impacted actually-existing anarchist political movements. What is beyond dispute is that postanarchist thought is largely (though by no means exclusively) a creature of academic philosophy—that is to say, of  $P_6$ —and this fact alone renders it suspicious in the eyes of those contemporary anarchists who regard institutional academia as “hierarchical and elitist” and “separate from the everyday conditions of the working class(es).”<sup>138</sup> This suspicion is of a piece with the broader anarchist tradition, which has long been skeptical of and even hostile toward institutionalized scientific and theoretical discourses and the “bourgeois intellectuals” who employ them.<sup>139</sup> Bakunin, who is particularly representative on this score, vigorously rejects the precedence of “abstract theory” over “social practice”<sup>140</sup> and rails against those who defend “the predominance of science over life”—the “abstract thinkers” who, by “lifting [themselves] in thought above [themselves],” achieve nothing but “the representation of perfect abstraction”<sup>141</sup> The worst of these are professional academics, whom Bakunin describes as “modern priests of licensed political and social quackery.” Inclined “by their very nature ... to all sorts of intellectual and moral corruption,”<sup>142</sup> academics “poison the university youth” and produce “doctrinaire[s] full of conceit and contempt for the rabble, whom [they are] ready to exploit in the name of [their] intellectual and moral superiority.”<sup>143</sup> Just as the Roman Catholic Church “once sanctioned the violence perpetrated by the nobility upon the people,” so does academia, “this church of bourgeois

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136 Jun, “On Philosophical Anarchism,” 553–554.

137 The literature on philosophical anarchism is also extensive. For representative criticisms, see Jun, “On Philosophical Anarchism,” and Franks, “Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy.” For a somewhat more sympathetic treatment see McLaughlin, “In Defense of Philosophical Anarchism,” as well as McLaughlin’s contribution to this volume.

138 Franks, “Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy,” 50.

139 D. Goodway, “Literature and Anarchism,” in Kinna, ed., *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, 197.

140 Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, 136.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid., 134.

143 Ibid., 74.

science, explain and condone the exploitation of the same people by bourgeois capital.”<sup>144</sup>

Malatesta—to cite another classic example—also denies the “infallibility of Science,” rejects any and all attempts “to give ‘a scientific basis’ to anarchism,” argues that deterministic and mechanistic conceptions of the universe are incompatible with notions of “will, freedom, [and] responsibility,”<sup>145</sup> and claims that philosophy is often little more than “a play on words and an illusionist’s trick.”<sup>146</sup> He contends that “most of the so-called intellectuals are, by reason of their education, their family background, [and] their class prejudices tied to the Establishment”<sup>147</sup> and that their “natural tendency” is “to keep apart from the people and form themselves into coteries; to give themselves airs and end up believing themselves protectors and saviors whom the masses should worship.”<sup>148</sup> For Malatesta, anarchism is not a matter of intellectual hair-splitting but of action: “what is important is not what we achieve, but how we achieve it.”<sup>149</sup> This clearly echoes Bakunin’s pronouncement that “... the time of grand theoretical discourse, written or spoken, is past ... [and] ... it is no longer time for ideas but deeds and acts.”<sup>150</sup>

If I am right in suggesting that anarchist thought lacks any significant relationship to  $P_6$ , this leaves only one option—viz., that anarchism is a *political* philosophy (or a group of related political philosophies, or a broad political-philosophical tendency or orientation). As noted previously, “political philosophy” can refer either to a more or less uniform way of understanding “politics” (as in  $P_2$ ), or else to an intellectual practice or mode of inquiry that philosophically explores politics” (as in  $P_5$ )—that is, by means of “rational methods” such as *argumentation* and *analysis*. Although there is no reason in principle why all instances of the former must be products of the latter, conventional accounts tend to take for granted that “political philosophies” (in the sense of  $P_2$ ) differ from political ideologies, political theories, and other forms of political thought insofar as they are formulated by means of “political

144 M. Bakunin, *The Basic Bakunin*, ed. R. Cutler (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1992), 124.

145 Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 39, 44.

146 *Ibid.*, 42.

147 *Ibid.*, 138.

148 *Ibid.*, 140.

149 *Ibid.*, 70.

150 Quoted in M. Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion* (Boston: Seven Stories Press, 2009), 242.

philosophizing" (in the sense of  $P_5$ ).<sup>151</sup> It behooves us, accordingly, to examine  $P_5$  in closer detail.

Political philosophy in the Western intellectual tradition has been characterized by two distinct but related ends that it has pursued by means of the "philosophical" practices and modes of inquiry described in  $P_3$ .<sup>152</sup> The first end, which may be termed "constructive," involves the formulation of rigorous definitions of fundamental political concepts; the systematic organization of these concepts into clearly-defined "perspectives" or "positions" (i.e., "political philosophies" in the sense of  $P_2$ ); and the defense of these "perspectives" or "positions" vis-à-vis the provision of arguments. The second end, which may be termed "critical," involves evaluating already-existing definitions of fundamental political concepts as well as the various "political philosophies" they constitute. In its constructive dimension, therefore, Western political philosophy has been principally concerned with assigning particular meanings to "political concepts" (i.e., concepts in terms of which the basic subject matter of the political is described and evaluated); marshaling these concepts in the formulation of descriptive or normative propositions; and organizing these propositions into a more or less coherent theoretical framework within which political questions may be scrutinized and answered. In its critical dimension, by contrast, political philosophy has sought to critically evaluate and compare political philosophies in terms of one or more of their basic elements.

As Michael Freeden notes, "formal" political philosophy of this sort—as well as the "political philosophies" that issue from it—displays "strong similarities" with political ideology, particularly as concerns its "normative and recommendatory features ..."<sup>153</sup> For example, both seek to decontest political concepts, formulate distinctive political "ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes," and—in many cases, at least—to "provide directives, even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavour to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community ..."<sup>154</sup> At the same time, there are also important differences between them. In the first place, whereas political philosophy has tended to be a restricted discourse that is "accessible only to specialists and thus bereft of wider public impact,"<sup>155</sup> political ideologies typically emerge out of, or

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151 J.H. Hallowell, *Main Currents in Modern Political Thought* (New York: Holt, Rineheart and Winston, 1950), 9; Johari, *Contemporary Political Theory*, 20.

152 Cf. Freeden, "Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy," 3–6.

153 Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 1.

154 Freeden, "Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy," 6.

155 *Ibid.*, 11–12.

coextensively with, popular political, social, and cultural movements. In the second place, whereas political philosophy has generally been a solitary enterprise carried out by “exceptionally talented, or expertly trained, individuals,” political ideologies tend to develop out of the combined efforts of countless “activists”—many of them anonymous. In the third place, whereas political philosophy self-consciously avoids emotionally-charged rhetoric in favor of dispassionate logical analysis and argumentation (the “rational methods” described previously), political ideologies are chiefly interested in persuading the public and, for this reason, have tended to follow the exact opposite strategy.

All of this would seem to imply that political philosophy (in the sense of both  $P_2$  as well as  $P_5$ ) does not differ from political ideology in terms of *what* it does so much as *how*, *why*, and *in what context* it does it. Indeed, this is at least partly what Freeden has in mind when he concludes that political philosophy—no less than political theory—is “an ideological phenomenon”<sup>156</sup> There are at least three important conclusions that may be drawn from this claim: first, that “political philosophies” (in the sense of  $P_2$ ) are particular instances of ideology rather than altogether distinct forms of political thought; second, that  $P_5$  is but one form of ideological thinking; and third, that formal political philosophy of the sort described above is but one form of  $P_5$ . The last point is especially key, as it decouples the use of rational methods as such from the particular ways they have been used in the history of Western political thought. This challenges the notion that political philosophizing does not or cannot exist outside of the restricted, individualistic milieu of formal political philosophy. It also broadens the scope of political philosophy beyond the narrowly descriptive and normative concerns of the latter and incorporates forms of political thinking that focus on strategic and tactical questions (e.g., questions of how to transform existing political realities to bring them in line with ideal conceptions of justice or the good life)<sup>157</sup> as well as the critical philosophy associated with thinkers in the “Continental” tradition.

In previous sections, we not only established that anarchism qualifies as a political ideology in Freeden’s sense but also that it embodies many of the features that are commonly associated with ideologies—for example, the fact that it was born out of popular movements rather than the speculations of solitary thinkers operating in elite intellectual contexts. We also noted that many anarchists have employed philosophical methods to articulate and justify anarchist ideas (thereby echoing the distinctive means and ends of formal political philosophy) as well as to explore strategic and tactical questions. This

156 Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 226.

157 May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralism Anarchism*, 4–7.

fact by itself illustrates an obvious but important sense in which anarchism and philosophy are related. At the same time, earlier observations regarding the relationship of anarchist ideas to anarchist practices make it clear that anarchism is not a wholly rationalistic mode of political thought, as this would imply that its practices proceed *from* its ideas, at least some of which are themselves products of rationalistic deliberation or analysis. As we have seen, on the contrary, anarchists have long insisted that their ideas are *products* and not (or not just) *producers* of their practices and practical tendencies.

Note that the latter claim (viz., that anarchist practices proceed from anarchist ideas) does not necessarily negate the former claim (viz., that at least some anarchist ideas are products of rationalistic deliberation or analysis). It is possible, for example, that at least some anarchist ideas were generated through *ex post facto* attempts by anarchist intellectuals to explain or justify preexistent anarchist practices and practical tendencies. Although such attempts proceed *from* anarchist practices and not the other way around, they are nonetheless rationalistic in nature, if only in a minimal sense. This suggests that the intellectual content of anarchist ideology contains *both* rationalistic *as well as* non-rationalist elements—in other words, that anarchist thought is a matter of the heart as well as the mind.

While anarchism does not appear to qualify as an *instance* of P<sub>1</sub>, P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, or P<sub>6</sub>, it is nonetheless non-trivially related to instances of each. Furthermore, although P<sub>2</sub> and P<sub>5</sub> appear to qualify as particular instances of political ideology, and although some instances of anarchist thought are non-trivially related to P<sub>5</sub>, anarchism as such does not qualify as a particular instance of P<sub>2</sub>. This suggests that anarchism is not *a* political philosophy even though anarchist thinkers have occasionally drawn upon the methods of formal political philosophy. On the contrary, anarchism is an ideology or ideological tradition the intellectual content of which has been shaped in part by the distinctive practices and associated concerns of P<sub>5</sub>.

## Conclusion

Whether it is understood as a kind of “view” or “perspective” (as in P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>) or as an “activity” or “practice” (as in P<sub>3</sub>, P<sub>4</sub>, P<sub>5</sub>, and P<sub>6</sub>), philosophy is thoroughly intellectual in character, concerned first and foremost with *ideas* rather than *actions*. As Freeden notes, even its more explicitly political iterations tend to be “private discourses”<sup>158</sup> that are out of touch “with the real-world arena of

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<sup>158</sup> M. Freeden, “Political Ideologies in Substance and Method: Appraising a Transformation,” in *Reassessing Political Ideologies: The Durability of Dissent*, ed. M. Freeden (London: Routledge, 2001), 8.

policy-making"<sup>159</sup> and "removed ... from the practice and language of politics."<sup>160</sup> While there is no question that formal political philosophy sees itself as a "guide, a corrective, and a justification for enlightened and civilized forms of organized social life and political institutions ... the disciplinary constraints that apply to producing good philosophy have all too often distanced its practitioners from the actual stuff of politics and have contributed to a general sense of the estrangement of philosophy from political life."<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, the fact that political ideologies tend to place a much heavier emphasis on engaged political activity is one reason among many why they have been considered inferior modes of political thinking<sup>162</sup>—the underlying assumption being that this emphasis is at odds with the intellectual values of "rationality, clarity of argument, logical coherence, and consistency."<sup>163</sup>

All of this is moot, of course, if political philosophy is itself a species of ideology that "involves selective decontestations of political concepts like any other"<sup>164</sup> and "displays features common to other ideological forms ... such as an appeal to unexamined value assumptions, and the investment of emotional attachment to particular points of view."<sup>165</sup> In this case, what distinguishes political philosophy from other ideologies is precisely its tendency toward political disengagement, where this, in turn, is either a basic commitment of its practitioners or else a contingent consequence of its methodology and subject matter. Such disengagement, moreover, would appear to make political philosophy a rather bloodless and ineffectual member of the ideological family even if, on some level, it has intellectual merits that other more practice-oriented ideologies lack.

Although anarchism is clearly an ideology in the weak sense of displaying a conceptual morphology, it is also an ideology in the strong sense insofar as it has consistently emphasized practice even in its more explicitly philosophical iterations. This comes as no surprise since, as we have seen, anarchism was born from and shaped by active political engagement and has always scorned abstract theory divorced from action. If anarchist thought appears "less sophisticated" than formal political philosophies, it is precisely for this reason.

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159 M. Freeden, *Liberal Languages: Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 6.

160 Freeden, "Political Ideologies in Substance and Method," 8.

161 Freeden, "Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy," 4.

162 *Ibid.*, 6.

163 M. Humphrey, "Getting 'Real' About Political Ideas," in *Liberalism as Ideology: Essays in Honour of Michael Freeden*, eds. B. Jackson and M. Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 251.

164 Freeden, "Ideology, Political Theory and Political Philosophy," 10.

165 Humphrey, "Getting 'Real' About Political Ideas," 251.



Understanding the world in various ways is important, but anarchism's foremost imperative has always been to *change* it. More than anything else, perhaps, this explains its general aversion to the abstract content and esoteric methodologies associated with  $P_5$ , to say nothing of the other forms of "philosophy" that we discussed.

At the same time, the fact that anarchism isn't a "philosophy" (or a species of philosophy) in its own right does not mean that it is altogether unrelated to philosophy. As we have seen, on the contrary, there are deep connections between anarchist thought and philosophy under various descriptions. The intellectual content of anarchism has been shaped in significant ways by its engagement with other philosophical currents, and several of its most exemplary thinkers were artful practitioners of  $P_5$  (and, in some cases, of  $P_3$  as well). There is no question that anarchists have *done* and continue to *do* philosophy even if this enterprise has played a comparatively minor role in the historical development of anarchist thought. Understanding these connections is necessary in order to fully comprehend anarchism as a historical phenomenon no less than as a body of thought and practice; this is one reason why anarchist studies would benefit from more explicitly philosophical or intellectual-historical research.

On the other hand, even if we agree that anarchist thought is not a "political philosophy" in the sense of  $P_2$  and is not chiefly a product of  $P_5$ , it remains an open question whether this is an altogether neutral fact. One can certainly argue—as many anarchists have—that rationalistic approaches like  $P_5$  are objectively superior to (or, at the very least, have certain decisive advantages over) non-rationalistic approaches, in which case the failure of anarchist thought to engage more explicitly with the former is a lamentable historical shortcoming that anarchist thinkers should proactively seek to overcome. It has been claimed, for example, that political ideas founded on irrational (or at least non-rational) "faith," "confidence," or "belief" rather than considered rational judgments are arbitrary and foundationless, which implies that there are no clear ways to promote, advance, or advocate for them within the marketplace of ideas (and ideals), and thus no non-arbitrary reasons to organize movements that pursue political goals in their name. If true, this would mean that ideologies that can rationally articulate and justify their ideas would appear to be better off than ideologies that are unwilling or unable to do so, in which case anarchism would benefit by more robustly embracing  $P_5$ .

In short, the question of how philosophy and anarchism are related, no less than the question of how they *ought* to be related, are relevant not only to the study of anarchism as such, but also, and more importantly, to the ongoing development of anarchist thought and practice in the present. What follows is

an initial attempt to make this important fact more explicit and, in so doing, to inspire deeper inquiry going forward.

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## Anarchism and Aesthetics

*Allan Antliff*

If we understand “aesthetic” to refer to the sensate/emotive experiences that may arise from an art work, then an aesthetic, as a bearer of meaning attuned to anarchist values, does not “own” that experience. Rather, the politics of anarchism go to work on the aesthetic dimension of art, evaluating its efficacy and cultivating tensions arising from anarchy’s “openness,” its refusal of closure.

In the arts anarchism has inspired a plethora of approaches to aesthetics, including the rejection of conventional art production altogether in favor of other frameworks. For example, during the 1960s performance artist Joseph Beuys redefined society itself as an artistic creation—a “social sculpture”—so as to awaken us to our freedom to innovate and galvanize this freedom in the name of an anarchist social and ecological vision intent on dismantling state power non-violently.<sup>1</sup> Beuys’ re-conceptualization echoes Gustav Landauer’s assertion that a social revolution is an artistic act, a configuration that speaks volumes as to how integral the qualities we associate with aesthetics are to anarchist conceptions of enacting politics.<sup>2</sup> This is to say that the tensile interface between anarchism, aesthetics, and art is always anchored in specific contexts and challenges that have as much to do with the artist as they do with society.

A case in point is Gustave Courbet. Working in mid-nineteenth century France under the dictatorial Second Empire of Louis-Napoleon III (1852–1870), Courbet developed an aesthetic of “realism” suffused with elements of parody that aped the stylistic strictures of the imperial *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in order to subvert and attack the reigning power structure. His portrayals of working class people engaged in mundane tasks and monumentalized in a manner traditionally reserved for royalty or posed so as to play up the absurd unnaturalness of academic traditions rent the political fabric of the annual salon adjudicated by the *Ecole*.<sup>3</sup> Those who condemned this work recognized that

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1 Allan Antliff, *Joseph Beuys* (London: Phaidon Press, 2014), 70–72.

2 Ibid., 72.

3 Courbet’s subversion of “Salon Rhetoric” is discussed in Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, *The Most Arrogant Man in France: Gustave Courbet and Nineteenth-Century Media Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 76–113.



it did not support their cultural worldview or the systems of power associated with Napoleon III, while those who supported it in the press or purchased it on the art market became Courbet's allies. In effect, his tension-infused aesthetic simultaneously cultivated conflicts and affinities (the same interrelationship accrues in contemporary demonstrations when "black bloc" anarchists organizing on the basis of affinity intensify the demonstrators' capacity as a disruptive force).<sup>4</sup>

But that is not all. Adopting Pierre Joseph Proudhon's concept of realism in art as synonymous with social critique (mere mimesis being inadequate to the task of art's ethical role in fomenting social change), Courbet also asserted his expressive freedom through formal innovations—thick dabs of paint, variations in coloration and tone, scrumbling, plasticity of brushstroke, palate knife scrapings, and so forth—that enthralled sympathetic critics such as Emile Zola, even if their libertarian significance was lost on Proudhon himself.<sup>5</sup> Courbet's realism can be likened to a guerilla-style assertion of anarchist values within a cultural field circumscribed by political authoritarianism. The freedom he sought to realize in painterly terms came into its own during the short-lived Paris Commune (March 18 to May 28, 1871), during which Courbet participated in the founding of the Federation of Paris Artists. The Federation's program, issued on April 13, declared freedom of expression in the arts as the premise for publically-funded commissions and the establishment of centers of artistic learning (art training, art history, aesthetics and philosophy, etc.) in which new styles could be cultivated without state interference.<sup>6</sup> In the midst of an insurrection, realism as social critique merged with all manner of artistic experimentation, a transvaluing process of aesthetic "opening" that held out great promise, however briefly, before the Commune's demise.

Formal qualities such as those that captivated Zola (and, for that matter, Courbet) have served not only as a means of self-expression, but also as a means of prefiguring anarchy. The European-based neo-impressionist movement, which flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, combined the science of optics with contemporary psychological theories concerning the emotive qualities evoked by variations in linearity (upward or downward curves). In so doing, it developed a painterly style that could serve

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4 See Francis Dupuis-Déri, "Anarchism and the Politics of Affinity Groups," *Anarchist Studies* 18, no. 1 (2010): 51–54.

5 Allan Antliff, *Anarchy and Art: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2008), 29–31.

6 The Federation's program is reproduced in Eugène Pottier, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Pierre Brochon (Paris: F. Maspero, 1966), 204–205.

as an analog for the spontaneous natural harmony which an anarchist social order would emulate.<sup>7</sup> Robyn Roslak cites Joseph Déjacque's *L'Humanisphère* (1859) to contextualize the neo-impressionist perspective: "Just as orbs [atoms and molecules] circulate anarchically in universality," Déjacque wrote, "so men must circulate anarchically in humanity, under the sole impulse of sympathies and aversions, of reciprocal attractions and repulsions. Harmony can only exist through anarchy. There is the whole solution to the social problem."<sup>8</sup> Applying paint in discrete dots of pure color on the canvas in accord with principles of color harmony, the neo-impressionists synthesized these elements into an analogous painterly "organism" which highlighted social anarchy's "natural" foundation. Neo-impressionists frequently pit the unnatural authoritarianism of capitalism against anarchy's freely associative natural order in these terms. Depicting desiccated industrial landscapes and suburban slums utilizing color theory and emotive linearity, neo-impressionists contrasted the pleasurable beauty of aesthetic harmony on the canvas with the ugly destruction that capitalism was visiting upon the earth as well as humanity—a theme which they propagated through exhibitions and illustrations for the anarchist press.<sup>9</sup>

While neo-impressionism's aesthetic grounded anarchism in a material order, the English modernists Clive Bell and Roger Fry sought transcendence, as codified in two controversial "Post-Impressionist" exhibitions as well as Bell's influential statement, *Art* (1914).<sup>10</sup> *Art* is an interpretation and defense of "significant form," which Bell and Fry identified with "the spiritual view of life."<sup>11</sup> Subject matter, Bell argued, was secondary to a painting's non-representational formal elements—line and color—which conveyed art's emotional significance.<sup>12</sup> "To appreciate a work of art," he wrote, "we need bring with us

7 Robyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 25–28.

8 Joseph Déjacque, *L'Humanisphère, Utopie Anarchique* (1859; reprint, Brussels: Administration, 1899), 56, quoted in Roslak, *Neo-Impression and Anarchism*, 21.

9 Roslak, 117–118.

10 Clive Bell, *Art* (New York: Frederick A Stokes, 1914). Bell and Fry's collaboration began in 1910, when they co-curated the infamous "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" exhibit at London's Grafton Galleries. The exhibit showcased paintings by Edouard Manet, Paul Cezanne (Post-Impressionism's "founder"), Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Maurice Vlaminck, Andre Derain, Henri Matisse, and Georges Rouault. A second, more expansive "Post-Impressionist" exhibition in 1912 included work by French and Russian modernists as well as a British contingent selected by Bell (Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Wyndham Lewis, Eric Gill, Roger Fry, Frederick Etchells, Jesse Etchells, and Spencer Gore).

11 *Ibid.*, 160.

12 *Ibid.*, 12.

nothing but a sense of form and color and knowledge of three-dimensional space.”<sup>13</sup> In doing so one would come into contact with “pure form,” a “reality” or “thing in itself” attuned to the artist’s sensibilities.<sup>14</sup>

Such a construction placed the onus on Bell and Fry to demonstrate that “significant form” was integral to art-making as such. To this end, Bell narrated an all-encompassing history of art, with European culture at the forefront, amalgamating “primitive,” Early Christian, Romanesque, and Post-Impressionist artists into the same framework—namely, “a passionate desire to express their sense of form.”<sup>15</sup> Whenever this quest was displaced in favor of representing the world accurately, telling a story, or simply imitating a past style, the quality of art declined. On this basis Bell attacked the Western academic tradition, which perpetuated the Italian Renaissance’s emulation of Greek and Roman art, for harming art’s true purpose. Bell was adamantly opposed to corrupting elements that had “nothing whatsoever to do with art.” “Only significant form,” he insisted, could stimulate the “aesthetic emotion” that infused art with meaning.<sup>16</sup>

When Bell and Fry first showcased their aesthetic at the 1910 Post-Impressionist exhibition, critics accused them of cultural anarchism, claiming the exhibit was “the analogue of the anarchical movement in the political world, the aim being to reduce all institutions to chaos.”<sup>17</sup> Rising to the defense in the *Nation* magazine, Fry welcomed the label, agreeing that Post-Impressionists were, indeed, “cutting away” art’s “representative element” to reveal “the fundamental laws of expressive form in its barest, most abstract elements.”<sup>18</sup> This was not an exercise in destruction for destruction’s sake; it was “intensely constructive,” just like anarchism’s program for social renewal. Evoking the same affinity in *Art*, Bell characterized Post-Impressionism as “anarchical” because “it insists so emphatically on fundamentals and challenges so violently the conventional tradition of art and, by implication ... the conventional view of life.”<sup>19</sup> Again Bell politicized “significant form” by drawing parallels between uncompromising formalism in art and anarchism’s program for reconstructing society from the ground up. Pitching Post-Impressionism in these terms only begged the question as to how “significant form” contributed

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13 Ibid., 27.

14 Ibid., 213.

15 Ibid., 39, 211.

16 Ibid., 225.

17 See, for example, Ebenezer Wake Cook, “The Post-Impressionists,” in *Post-Impressionists in England: The Critical Reception*, ed. J.B. Bullen (London: Routledge, 1988), 119.

18 Roger Fry, “The Grafton Gallery—I,” in Bullen, *Post-Impressionists in England*, 121.

19 Bell, 242.

to social transformation. On this score, the aesthetic proved remarkably conservative. "Like all sound revolutions," wrote Bell, "Post-Impressionism is nothing more than a return to first principles."<sup>20</sup> Anchored in a "primitive" sensibility that had hitherto been eclipsed (with few exceptions) in Europe since the twelfth century but persisted in the "Oriental" world beyond Europe's shores, this variant in anarchist aesthetics disengaged from social change.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Bell had little faith that any more than a tiny fraction of humanity at any given time could ever create or appreciate "significant form."<sup>22</sup>

Bell and Fry drew an analogy between going back to first principles in art and going back to first principles in society: "significant form" was an unchanging essence specific to art, whose sole social function is to give pleasure to the select few capable of enjoying it. What, then, of its political corollary? Was anarchism also an unchanging, inert "essence" lurking in society's substrata? Bell and Fry treat it as an adjunct of aesthetics, a cipher devoid of substance. It comes as no surprise, then, that their response to the First World War was to gradually insulate themselves by withdrawing into the domestic sphere.<sup>23</sup>

The most compelling contemporary critique of "significant form" was mounted by Indian anarchist and anti-colonialist activist Ananda Coomaraswamy, who propagated a transcultural variation of anarchism in *The Dance of Shiva* (1918) and other publications. The object of non-anarchist governing systems, Coomaraswamy argued, is "to make the governed behave as the governors wish."<sup>24</sup> The repudiation of such tyranny, therefore, necessitated the rejection of all forms of governing in favor of anarchism's ideal, "individual autonomy." Here there are two options. One is to reorder society so as to maximize individual independence, an arrangement in which cooperation could only be achieved by an agreement to submit to majority rule. In this case, the focus of everyone's activity remains self-fulfillment, leaving little "vocational activity" for the common good. In practice, the resulting "anarchy of chaos" leads to an

20 Ibid., 43–44.

21 Hence *Art's* frontispiece photo: a fifth century Chinese Wei sculpture. Hence, also, Fry's comparison of Post-Impressionist paintings to "the works of early primitives" [and] the masterpieces of Oriental art," which "suggest visions to the imagination, rather than impose them on the senses" (Fry, "The Grafton Gallery—1," in Bullen, *Post-Impressionists*, 123).

22 Bell, 261.

23 Christopher Reed, *Bloomsbury Rooms: Modernism, Subculture, and Domesticity* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2004), 169–181.

24 Ananda Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva* (New York: Sunwise Turn, 1918), 137.

“unstable [social] equilibrium” that can only be righted by a return to some form of the previous “tyrannical” order.<sup>25</sup>

The alternative approach to individual autonomy is self-fulfillment through “renunciation—a repudiation of the will to govern.” If this anarchist consciousness is adopted (a consciousness which, Coomaraswamy argued, was a core tenet of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche), there is nothing to prevent the recognition of common interests or the cooperation needed to achieve a harmonious anarchist social order. “Mutual aid” would allow each individual to “fulfill his own [social] function,” resulting in a “spontaneous anarchy of renunciation” that could bring an end to humanity’s strife and discord. Coomaraswamy envisaged this anarchist ethos functioning as a guide for social reorganization under an “enlightened executive.”<sup>26</sup> Though still retaining a semblance of government, such a society of “unending love and unending liberty” would be blessed by “the greatest degree of freedom and justice practically possible.”<sup>27</sup>

For Coomaraswamy, aesthetics was the cultural means of diffusing such anarchism throughout society and the cornerstone of his program for India’s liberation from colonialism. In the era prior to European colonization, he argued, art was inseparable from the cultural and material life of India. Working under a social corporate structure “not unlike that of early medieval Europe,” generation upon generation of craftsmen had developed a representational aesthetics in sculpture, painting, textiles, and architecture that prioritized the “Idea behind sensuous experience” over mimesis, thus invigorating the spiritual concerns animating society as a whole.<sup>28</sup> Colonialism, however, had disrupted community support of the artist-craftsman. India was flooded with machine-made, mass-produced goods which destroyed local economies and drove “the village weaver from his loom [and] the craftsman from his tools.”<sup>29</sup> Imperialism also introduced European-style educational programs that devalued traditional art.<sup>30</sup> Coomaraswamy’s solution was a “post-industrial” anti-colonial revolution in India and a parallel restructuring from an industrial

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25 Ibid., 138.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., 139.

28 Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (Broad Campden, U.K.: Essex House Press, 1908), ii, v, 41.

29 Ibid., vi.

30 Ibid., 96–108.

to an arts-and-crafts based economy in Europe. Only then could anarchy's socially-transformative aesthetic be unleashed.<sup>31</sup>

If renewing traditional art practices would facilitate India's transformation, Europe's revolution would be inaugurated by modern artists. Condemning the capitalistic "materialism" embodied in Europe's academic-based mimetic traditions, Coomaraswamy suggested that the growing popularity of the "post-impressionists" (Paul Gauguin, Vincent Van Gogh, and others) signaled a cultural shift away from such values.<sup>32</sup> In this way he was prepared to welcome some of the arguments Bell mounted in *Art*, notably his praise of emotive "exaltation" through "pure form," free of "unaesthetic matters such as associations" and other "materialist" residue.<sup>33</sup> However, he disagreed with Bell's insistence that "pure form" was the sole means of evoking an aesthetic response, arguing that "any theme proper to [the artist]" could serve as an avenue for raising our consciousness, since, as the arts of India made clear, "the Absolute [self-enlightenment]" can be "manifested equally in the little and the great, animate and inanimate, good and evil."<sup>34</sup> Coomaraswamy's consciousness-raising aesthetic would not be hemmed in by Bell and Fry's formalism or their social elitism.

While Coomaraswamy introduced an anti-colonial dimension to anarchist aesthetics, feminists in the United Kingdom and the United States placed gender at the forefront. In the years leading up to the First World War, the Women's Social and Political Union (founded in 1903) campaigned for the right to vote using blockades, the invasion of political meetings, window smashing, bombings, hunger strikes, and several acts of martyrdom, all of which gave the movement a "direct action" orientation more associated with anarchism than with state-adjudicated politics. Once the war was declared, however, this style of activism came to an abrupt end. Suffragette organizations in Britain rallied to the war effort and, in return, politicians resolved to pass legislation giving women over thirty the right to vote. Although many American feminists initially worked to keep the country out of the war, their agitation was also rechanneled along patriotic lines once the United States joined the side of the

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31 A.J. Penty, *Post-Industrialism* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 14.

32 Ananda Coomaraswamy, "Love and Art," *Modern Review* 17 (May 1915): 581; "The Cave Paintings of Ajanta: An Almost Unique Type of Classical Indian Art Which Appeals Strongly to Modernists," *Vanity Fair* 7 (Sept. 1916): 98.

33 Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, 36.

34 Ibid.

allies in April 1917, a strategy that resulted in the enfranchisement of women in 1920.<sup>35</sup>

There was, however, an alternative to suffragette politics within Anglo-American feminism. This anarchist variant not only problematized the movement's relationship to the state, but also shifted feminism's focus from agitation for civil rights to the critical interrogation of gender identity. One of the key protagonists in this development was Dora Marsden, a militant British feminist who broke with the Women's Social and Political Union in a bid to reconfigure feminism along anarchist lines. Unlike many of her peers, Marsden sought to place individual agency and the development of a critical consciousness at the forefront of the struggle. To this end, she published a series of journals that served as platforms for her views. The change in titles (from *The Freewoman* to *The New Freewoman* to *The Egoist*) reflects the progression of her thought towards an individualist orientation that ultimately departed from the feminist label, even if feminist concerns remained part of the equation.

Building on the work of Les Garner, Bruce Clarke, and others, Lucy Delap has unpacked the key features of Marsden's anarchist turn from conventional feminism. Marsden's publications circulated in radical feminist circles in America, and Delap draws frequently on the writings of the New York-based activist Edna Kenton to illustrate Marsden's perspective. In a 1913 article Kenton described feminism as "any woman's spiritual and intellectual attitude toward herself and toward life. It is her conscious attempt to realize Personality; to make her own decisions instead of having them made for her; to sink the old humbled or rebelling slave in the new creature who is mistress of herself."<sup>36</sup> This new "creature," the "mistress of herself," is a dynamic individual whose continual self-fashioning resisted any social, cultural or political forces that sought to enforce normative values or constrain personal freedom. It followed, then, that this sort of feminism was opposed to the state's imposition of citizenship and all the interpolating legal mechanisms and social practices that went along with it. In a polemic against the United States' involvement in

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35 On the British suffragettes and their pro-war turn see Lucy Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde: Transatlantic Encounters of the Early Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 294. In America, Margaret C. Jones observes, "the leaders of the mainstream National American Woman Suffrage Association saw in women's involvement in all kinds of 'war work' an opportunity to prove women's patriotism and their practical capability as citizens." See Margaret C. Jones, *Heretics and Hell-raisers* (Austin, Tex: University of Texas Press, 1993), 78.

36 Edna Kenton, "Feminism Will Give—Men More Fun, Women Greater Scope, Children Better Parents, Life More Charm," *Delineator* 85 (Jul. 1914): 17, quoted in Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, 36.

World War I, Kenton tellingly condemned all national boundaries and symbols of nationhood.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Marsden dismissed citizenship as an abstract concept imposed by the administrative apparatus of the state in order to mold independent individuals into instruments in the hands of those in power.<sup>38</sup>

The political touchstone of Marsden's and Kenton's feminism was the egoist philosophy of German anarchist Max Stirner, whose 1845 statement, *The Ego and His Own*, was first published in English by American anarchist Benjamin Tucker in 1907. Marsden's *Freewoman*, *New Freewoman*, and *Egoist* journals were important forums for promoting Stirner's philosophy in the Anglo-American feminist movement. Egoism, in Marsden's formulation, refused preexisting social constructions of femininity—including those marshaled by feminists themselves—in favor of a psychologically-based insurrectionary consciousness that would vary from individual to individual and be attuned to the specificities of personality.<sup>39</sup> Stirner's philosophy was attractive among women precisely because it was *not* sexist. James Walker underscored this point in his introduction to the 1912 edition of *The Ego and His Own*, noting that "Stirner's attitude toward women is not special. She is an individual if she can be, not handicapped by anything she says, feels, thinks, or plans ... there is not a line in the book to put or keep women in an inferior position to man."<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, the feminist aspect of Stirner's philosophy did not jibe well with the aesthetics of Vorticism, the artistic movement with which Dora Marsden's *Egoist* journal was most closely associated. Many of the movement's male participants—notably the critic and poet Ezra Pound, the painter Wyndham Lewis, and the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska—were outspokenly "masculine," often to the point of caricature, in their praise of Vorticism's hard-edged, abstractionist style of art. Writing in the February 1914 issue of the *Egoist* on the sculptures of Gaudier-Brzeska, Pound praised the artist's emotionally-charged "savage" aesthetic as the epitome of liberated individualism.<sup>41</sup> The

37 Edna Kenton, "North, South, East, West," *Four Lights* (27 Jan. 1917), n.p., quoted in Delap, *The Feminist Avant-Garde*, 308.

38 Mark Antliff, "Politicizing the New Sculpture," in *Vorticism: New Perspectives*, eds. Mark Antliff and Scott Klein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102.

39 In her study of the British suffragettes, Lisa Tickner discusses the mobilization of stereotypical notions of femininity within the existing patriarchy—notably the idea that women were inherently more peaceful and nurturing and thus would put a break on war mongering, if given the vote. See Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

40 James Walker, Introduction to Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*, trans. Steven Byington (London: A.C. Fifield, 1912), xv–xvii.

41 Ezra Pound, "The New Sculpture," *The Egoist* 1, no. 4 (16 Feb. 1914): 67–68.



journal also featured a statement by Gaudier-Brzeska in which he characterized his art as “instinctual,” “intense” and “barbaric.”<sup>42</sup> These “virile” qualities arose in the first instance from his technique of direct carving, which put him in touch with his material and facilitated the aesthetic realization of his authentic personality.<sup>43</sup> Gaudier-Brzeska’s tribute sculpture, *The Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound*, is a classic statement of aesthetic egoism as male virility. Asserting that mind and sexuality are inseparable, Gaudier-Brzeska presented Pound’s head as the unique site of mental activity and sensate experience (the highly abstract portrait-bust “transforms” into an erect penis as you move around it), faculties which, for Stirner, are indelibly interconnected. Pound is an all-male egoist, freed from the social constraints of normative decorum, and reveling in his own sexual prowess. This convention-shattering aesthetic might evoke a range of responses—surprise, laughter, outrage, shock, bewilderment, delight or wonder, all in equal measure.

While Vorticism’s male artists championed their aesthetic as the index of their masculinized psycho-sexual anarchism, their female counterparts—Helen Saunders, Jessica Dismorr, Dorothy Shakespear and Kate Lechmere—went in another direction. Marsden’s Stirnerite concept of “ungendered individuality” appealed to Saunders and her fellow artists because it was a means of springing “the [modernist] trap of binary opposition that located them within the category of feminine” rather than masculine.<sup>44</sup> For these artists, Vorticist abstraction offered an aesthetic equivalent to Marsden’s egoism which allowed women to occupy the “masculine” space of modern art and claim it as their own. Saunders’ pencil and gouache *Dance* (c. 1915), for example, integrates two interlocking angular, hard-edged, abstract forms into a configuration of brightly-colored sections, diagonals, and lines. Evading sexual difference in favor of expressive individualism keyed to the visual language of abstraction, the work is devoid of any gender markers. As Beckett and Cherry conclude, the “visual economy” of Vorticism “was not founded on the trade in woman as sign” or the artistic encoding of bodily form according to “sexual difference.”<sup>45</sup> Any markers of femininity were erased, leaving the viewer to consider the aesthetic effect of the work irrespective of gender. But I would add an important caveat. Whereas British patriarchy determined that the

42 Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, “On ‘The New Sculpture,’” *The Egoist* 1, no. 6 (16 Mar. 1914): 117–118.

43 Antliff, “Politicizing the New Sculpture,” 111.

44 Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry, “Reconceptualizing Vorticism: Women, Modernity, Modernism,” in *Blast: Vorticism, 1914–1918*, ed. Paul Edwards (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2000), 62.

45 Ibid., 72.

egoist male Vorticist could accommodate gendering in the manner of Gaudier-Brzeska's *Hieratic Head*, egoist liberation for the female Vorticist was all about mobilizing abstraction to refuse gendering. The aesthetic was liberating only up to a point, so long as female egoism remained constrained within its abstract nomenclature.

Presupposing that social transformation and aesthetic experience can co-mingle and reinforce each other, anarchists cultivate the power of the aesthetic in a bid to mobilize it and be changed by it. In this way aesthetics introduce new dimensions to living anarchically and contribute, as Jesse Cohn argues, to the "ensemble of relations" through which society is constituted.<sup>46</sup> An anarchist aesthetic resonates across shifting social parameters, bringing into being expressive avenues that are perpetually re-experienced and revisited through a process of intensifying anarchy—the realization of a state of becoming keyed to the subjectivities that accrue to and infuse the work of art with significance.<sup>47</sup>

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46 Jesse Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Politics* (Selinsgrove, Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), 195.

47 Ibid.

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# Anarchism and Liberalism

*Bruce Buchan*

... the anarchy is much alike to have no forme of government at all ...

JOHN LOCKE, *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), §198



## Introduction

The ineluctable conclusion toward which John Locke's arguments led in his *Two Treatises of Government* was that the viability of individual liberty hinged on the provision of security. After all, it was in order “to have that *Safety and Security in Civil Society*” that individuals would prefer to place themselves under the arbitrage of governments to secure “appeal ... against any harm they may receive” from others in a “state of Nature.”<sup>1</sup> Locke's great concession was that the individuals concerned would do so voluntarily. He understood this as a matter of either express or merely tacit consent—not as universal consent—that was given exclusively by propertied men. No person having so entered into a state of security could lament its absence,

For if any Man may do, what he thinks fit, and there be no Appeal on Earth, for Redress or Security against any harm he shall do; I ask, Whether he be not perfectly still in the State of Nature, and so can be *no part or Member of that Civil Society*: unless any one will say, the State of Nature

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<sup>1</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* [1690], ed. P. Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), II, §94, 329. I am indebted to Richard Yeo for his guidance on Locke's sources, and to Harriet Guest, John Barrell, and all the participants at the “Sound and the Senses in Britain c. 1700–1800” symposium in Brisbane in July 2014 for their comments and suggestions. Research for this paper was supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant, a Project Grant from the Swedish Foundation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, and by the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research, Griffith University.

and Civil Society are one and the same thing, which I have never yet found any one so great a Patron of Anarchy as to affirm.<sup>2</sup>

Though he used the term sparingly, Locke's few references to "anarchy" played an important role in his rhetorical strategy.<sup>3</sup> For Locke, anarchy denoted the absence of laws and, short of what one could provide for oneself, the loss of protection from (and, hence, exposure to) invasion, fraud, or violence from others without redress. Anarchy, in short, meant insecurity and a lack of safety.<sup>4</sup> It was for this reason that Locke was careful to distinguish the right of rebellion (against the tyrannous usurpations of a government that placed itself into a state of war with its own people) from a supposed right to resist any or all governments "as often as any one shall find himself aggrieved," for this will "unhinge and overturn all Politics, and instead of Government and Order, leave nothing but Anarchy and Confusion."<sup>5</sup>

In more recent times, Locke has been portrayed as an early spokesman for the liberal idea that government should be founded on the voluntary consent of its members—a position that some have described as "philosophically, [though] not practically anarchic."<sup>6</sup> In his own time, however, Locke trod a fine line in British political thought and practice. He was especially careful to distinguish the limitations of his own arguments for government by consent from existing models of government which many of his contemporary readers would have regarded as both practically and dangerously anarchic. In this paper, I want to examine Locke's references to two of these "anarchic" forms of government—those practiced by "Indians" in America, and by "Pyrates" on the high seas—as a way of exploring the early modern intellectual history of anarchy and security. Though a settled doctrine of "anarchism" was unknown in the early modern period, the ideas later formulated in the doctrine were a familiar staple of political discourse and debate. In exploring some aspects of this history, I do not claim Locke (or his "Indians" and "Pyrates") as antecedent anarchists. Rather, my aim is to illustrate a longer history of intellectual engagement and active experimentation with anarchic forms of political

2 Ibid., 330.

3 In addition to the references quoted in this chapter, all of which occur in the Second Treatise, Locke refers to "anarchy" only once in the First Treatise. This is in the context of refuting Sir Robert Filmer's *Observations upon Mr. Hunton's Treatise of Monarchy, or, the Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy*. See Locke, *Two Treatises*, 1, § 7, 145.

4 On the connotations of both terms see Jeremy Waldron, "Safety and Security," *Nebraska Law Review* 85, no. 2 (2006): 454–507.

5 Locke, *Two Treatises*, 11, §203, 401.

6 A.J. Simmons, *On the Edge of Anarchy. Locke, Consent, and the Limits of Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 268.

organization that have been regularly excluded from standard intellectual histories of anarchism.<sup>7</sup>

At the time he wrote and published his *Two Treatises* Locke was closely aligned to an influential group of property-owning, Parliamentary power-brokers led by Locke's patron, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury.<sup>8</sup> Shaftesbury's colorful career included serving in the regime that executed King Charles I in 1649, joining the delegation that raised Charles II to the throne in 1660, and ultimately leading an effort to oust Charles' brother and heir, James II, from the throne in 1679. For both Locke and Shaftesbury, the danger of rebellion was that it can be taken too far. The English Civil War (1642–49) had unleashed loud and passionate claims for a genuinely democratic settlement. Some of the first of these came from the "Levellers" in the victorious Parliamentary army, one of whose leaders, Colonel Rainborough, famously declaimed in the Putney Debates of 1647:

... I think the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he; and therefore truly, sir, I think it's clear, that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government ...<sup>9</sup>

While Rainborough's image of government by consent referred only to men, it was bold in extending the claim to those with little or no property. The Levellers claimed that consent to government was the birthright of all Englishmen and argued for a concept of democratic (if patriarchal) government in which "sovereign power" extended "no further than from the represented to the representers."<sup>10</sup> As radical a notion as this was at the time, the

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7 Early Modern debates are either not mentioned or consigned to a largely unexamined "pre-history" in the following studies: M. Adams, *Kropotkin, Read, and the Intellectual History of British Anarchism: Between Reason and Romanticism* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave, 2015); P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: HarperCollins, 1992); D. Goodway, ed., *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1989).

8 See, for example, P. Laslett, "John Locke, the Great Recoinage, and the Origins of the Board of Trade: 1695–1698," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1957): 377–378.

9 Quoted in "Extracts from the Army Debates, October 1647," in *Revolutionary Prose of the English Civil War*, ed. H. Erskine-Hill and G. Storey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 70.

10 Richard Overton, "An Arrow Against all Tyrants and Tyranny, shot from the prison of Newgate into the prerogative bowels of the arbitrary House of Lords and all other usurpers and tyrants whatsoever" [1646], in *The English Levellers*, ed. A. Sharp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63.

“Diggers” went further in claiming that the birthright of Englishmen extended to an equal share not only of political power but also of property. This birthright, they loudly proclaimed, had been denied them by the connivers and parasites of “kingly government” who ruled by force and fraud to keep the people oppressed and poor—“a government of highwaymen, who hath stolen the earth from the younger brethren by force, and holds it from them by force.”<sup>11</sup>

For Locke, such claims were redolent of the fear of anarchy, an end to the order that secured the rights and liberties of the men he represented. For this reason, Locke carefully kept his own arguments within bounds to which reasonable readers may be expected to agree. Specifically, Locke deployed three figures to distinguish his own model of government by consent from other more radical (and in his view defective) models of consensual government. These three figures—native American chiefs, Lacedaemonian kings in ancient Sparta, and pirate crews and captains in his own day—were integrated into Locke’s argument as negative examples of consent. Though Locke himself was neither a liberal nor an anarchist, his awareness of the tensions between expansive notions of consent and his own more limited arguments illustrate an abiding distinction between both traditions.<sup>12</sup>

### Lockean “Liberalism” and the “Anarchist” Canon

John Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* has long been considered a founding text in the history of liberal political thought.<sup>13</sup> The *ex post facto* recruitment of texts and thinkers to liberal, anarchist, or any other political-philosophical canon is a fraught maneuver, risking as it does an anachronistic attribution of ideas and arguments remote from the historical contexts that shaped them. Locke could not have been a “liberal” because the term itself only came to be used some two hundred years after his death. More to the point, Locke did not see himself as part of a tradition of political thinking that anticipated the kind of societies or governments that are now designated “liberal.” One response

11 Gerard Winstanley, “The Law of Freedom in a Platform” [1652], in *Winstanley: The Law of Freedom and Other Writings*, ed. C. Hill (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1973), 306–307.

12 Anarchist and liberal arguments both have diverse origins. See P. McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 101–102.

13 The idea of Locke as a “liberal” is forcefully criticized by J.C.D. Clark in *English Society, 1660–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 133.

to this difficulty is to re-conceptualize the historical constitution of political ideologies as a retrospective categorization of key arguments rather than a self-conscious tradition of thought that builds toward a commonly envisaged future.<sup>14</sup> The question is: which arguments are identified as most distinctive across time? Insofar as this chapter is concerned with anarchism and liberalism, those arguments will center on the relationship between the premium placed on freedom or liberty and the provision of security.

Liberal and anarchist political thought both emphasize the freedom of individuals. Liberals have favored individual freedom of thought, expression, and action as essential for the realization of human dignity, which they have often construed in terms of doctrines of human rights.<sup>15</sup> While “classical” liberals tend to view the freedom protected by rights in narrow terms (such as freedom of ownership, trade, movement, or choice), “social” liberals have argued for broader notions encompassing ideas of self-development in conjunction with the development of a free society. Liberals of all kinds, however, attach great significance to freedom of conscience, thought, and expression. Such freedoms, they argue, should only ever be limited to prevent direct and deliberate harm to others, though the tolerable degree of harm to self or others remains debatable.<sup>16</sup> Liberals tend to favor the view that individuals should be free to make, and learn from, their own mistakes, and that no person is more expert on her own needs and wishes than the individual herself. By enshrining this freedom we enshrine respect for the human dignity of all.

Anarchist contemporaries of J.S. Mill made similar if not altogether identical arguments for freedom as a form of “self-sovereignty.”<sup>17</sup> Something of this notion appears to inform Peter Kropotkin’s defense of the “the right to act” as the individual “thinks best.”<sup>18</sup> Like Kropotkin, Malatesta maintained that

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14 N. Jun, “Rethinking the Anarchist Canon: History, Philosophy, and Interpretation,” *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* 1 (2013): 88.

15 J. Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd edition (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013), 65–68.

16 Known as the “harm principle,” its anti-paternalistic implications were applied by Mill to rational adults in European societies, but not to those native populations then living under British and other European superintendence in various colonies. See B. Buchan, “Liberalism and Fear of Violence,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 4, no. 3 (2001): 38.

17 C. Sartwell, *Against the State: an Introduction to Anarchist Political Theory* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2008), 18.

18 Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchist Morality,” in *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed. R. Baldwin (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), 102–103.



“there can be no freedom if there is a denial of the freedom to err.”<sup>19</sup> Bakunin himself thought that “human dignity” required that individuals be left to pursue the good themselves—i.e., that a person should not be paternalistically forced to do good, but should do it because she “freely conceives it, wants it, and loves it.”<sup>20</sup> Although freedom of thought, expression, and action is vital for all these thinkers, freedom is a social product rather than an individual accomplishment.<sup>21</sup> In the spontaneous self-constitution of order, anarchists argue, individuals are able to realize a freedom that deepens and expands as the others with whom they act also become free.<sup>22</sup>

Where liberal and anarchist arguments diverge most sharply is in their respective arguments about security. Liberals of all varieties agree that unless there is a framework of government, laws, and some measure of coercive power, the freedom of individuals, their rights and possessions, will not be secure from the invasions of others (whether individuals or states). Different liberal thinkers will be drawn to this conclusion in rather different ways. In broad terms, liberals are divided between those for whom the provision of security requires a state empowered to enable the disadvantaged to achieve their freedom (through education or social welfare for example), and those for whom the state has little or no role in peoples’ lives other than to secure individuals in the exercise of their rights and the enjoyment of their possessions.<sup>23</sup> The liberal state may be an expansive and bureaucratic mechanism or a limited “night watchman,” but all liberals agree that the institutions of the state are supposed to secure the lives, liberties, and rights of citizens and that the legitimacy of the state derives from the consent of the governed. This axiomatic idea unites all liberals in their endorsement of the Hobbesian notion that modern political thought is founded in the psychology of rational self-interest that leads directly to the sovereign security state.

It could be said that the anarchist denial of the legitimacy of states—even those intended to provide security—also bespeaks a Hobbesian view of the

19 Errico Malatesta, *His Life and Ideas*, ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1965), 49.

20 Mikhail Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, ed. S. Dolgoff (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980), 240.

21 There are differences in the definition of freedom every bit as significant between egoistical anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists as there are between classical and social liberals. See, for example, C. Bottici, “Black and Red: The Freedom of Equals,” in *The Anarchist Turn*, ed. J. Blumenfeld, C. Bottici, and S. Critchley (London: Pluto Press, 2013), 9–34.

22 N. Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 125.

23 M. Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

state.<sup>24</sup> Unlike liberals, anarchists maintain that state sovereignty exists to protect and perpetuate itself and, as such, is antithetical to freedom of any kind. It was for this reason that Hobbes himself chose to define the true meaning of liberty as the unfettered ability of states to act as they please in the international state of nature.<sup>25</sup> Liberals, of course, have been wary of the idea of a Hobbesian state equipped with truly awesome sovereignty. In advocating for separations of power and checks and balances in constitutional liberal-democratic states, liberal thinkers have argued for the necessity not only of security by the state, but of security from the state as well.<sup>26</sup> In this way they echo Locke, who thought it the height of folly to suppose that citizens are only able to secure themselves from one another by placing themselves under an awesome sovereign—a view which regards humans as “so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done them by *Pole-Cats*, or *Foxes*, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by *Lions*.”<sup>27</sup>

Anarchists regard liberal efforts to hedge and diffuse state power as no more than an exercise in bad faith.<sup>28</sup> In their view, state sovereignty is an enemy to individual or collective freedom and no state can genuinely reflect the democratic sentiments of the people. Perhaps John Plamenatz put it best when he characterized anarchists as “the most extreme of democrats, going further than anyone else in insisting that such government as there must be should be truly popular.”<sup>29</sup> Although anarchists are opposed to states, however, it does not follow that they are necessarily opposed to the collective organization of the needs of individuals and communities (e.g., the provision of medical care and education, or the maintenance of civic infrastructure).<sup>30</sup> As Malatesta put it, anarchists do not deny the necessity for “collective forces which operate in society, nor the influences which people mutually exert on each other” but seek to end the monopolization and control of those collective forces by the few.<sup>31</sup> Anarchists are also not opposed to the idea that individuals should be able to live safely and securely. Rather, they contend that safety and security can only be attained by removing the sources of exploitation from society. The

24 A. Carter, *The Political Theory of Anarchism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 13–22.

25 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* [1651], ed. R. Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), II, §xxi, 149.

26 Buchan, “Liberalism and Fear of Violence,” 27–48.

27 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §93, 328.

28 S. Newman, *The Politics of Postanarchism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 17.

29 J. Plamenatz, *Democracy and Illusion* (London: Longman, 1973), 41.

30 Cf. Sartwell, *Against the State*, 31.

31 Errico Malatesta, *Anarchy* [1891], ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1974), 49.

exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the powerless by the powerful, or of women by men prompts a futile (because endless) search for ever greater levels of protection for the privileges and power of the few under the auspices of states.

Only by removing these obstructions, anarchists argue, can genuinely popular forms of decision-making be established that remove the need for “security.”<sup>32</sup> In this anarchists echo the arguments of earlier campaigners against tyranny and exploitation such as the Diggers, whose aim was to establish a “commonwealth government” that “governs the earth” peacefully without “buying and selling” and makes “provision for the oppressed, the weak and the simple, as well as for the rich, the wise and the strong.”<sup>33</sup> The Digger commonwealth was envisaged as a “common peace” in which all the inhabitants “are to assist each other, and all others are to assist them, as need requires ... And the rule of right government being thus observed may make a whole land, nay the whole fabric of the earth, to become one family of mankind, and one well governed commonwealth...”<sup>34</sup> In the following sections of this chapter I will argue that John Locke’s argument for circumscribed consent was premised on the denigration of alternate forms of more extensive consent. An examination of Locke’s thought as well as its surrounding context reveals how conservatively hedged his notion of consent was by an overriding preference for security and a corresponding dread of “anarchy”—hedging which ironically highlights the viability of those more “anarchic” and genuinely popular models of consent.

### Of Indian Chiefs and Lacedaemonian Kings

Through his association with the Earl of Shaftesbury’s schemes for settlement in the Carolinas and his later involvement with the Board of Trade, John Locke’s political thought developed within a context that was heavily shaped by British and European colonization.<sup>35</sup> Locke not only had colonial connections, but also invested in the slave trade and maintained one of the “finest” personal collections of “travel” narratives written by Europeans who

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32 Newman, *Politics of Postanarchism*, 33.

33 Winstanley, *Law of Freedom*, 311.

34 Ibid., 325.

35 For example, see Laslett, “John Locke”; D. Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 115–17; J. Tully, *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 137–176.

had ventured to the Americas, Africa, and Asia.<sup>36</sup> As such, it is not especially surprising that he should refer to America and to its indigenous inhabitants in the *Two Treatises* in order to argue that the New World was ripe for European possession, ownership, and exploitation. Locke's arguments can be interpreted as a further development of earlier Spanish and British attempts to restrict the scope of indigenous rights on the assumption that their forms of social and political organization were inferior, primitive, and undeveloped.<sup>37</sup> In making this claim, the Spanish and others understood themselves as having attained a higher level of *historical* development than the Indians, who only had unwritten, customary laws and defective governments (at best).<sup>38</sup> It was this discourse on which Locke drew, particularly in his use of the philosophical fiction known as "the state of nature."<sup>39</sup>

Locke employed the idea of a state of nature to show how political authority could be legitimately based upon the unforced consent of the members of civil society to renounce their own right of self-defense to a public authority. Locke's image of the state of nature was constructed from a range of colonial sources on indigenous peoples that depicted a condition without settled private property and legislative authority. The agreements needed to establish the latter he famously described in his chapter "Of Property" as emanating from the "common consent" of the more advanced peoples of the Earth to the use of money as the universal means of exchange, thus allowing the accumulation of property.<sup>40</sup> Such agreements set the bounds of each person's property *within civil society*, and they also established the bounds of territories *between* the "several States and Kingdoms" of the Earth. The implication was that where peoples had not consented to the use of money, no property beyond the immediate possessions necessary for self-preservation could be accumulated; thus

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36 R. Ashcraft, "John Locke's Library: Portrait of an Intellectual," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 5, no. 1 (1969): 53.

37 R. Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42–45.

38 N. Canny, "England's New World and the Old, 1480's–1630's," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. 1, ed. N. Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 148–169.

39 Locke was familiar with a variety of European colonial sources, among them the Spanish Jesuit Fr. Joseph De Acosta's argument that the "thing wherein these barbarous people [of Spanish America] shew their barbarisme, was in their government..." See Joseph de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies* [1604], vol. 2, trans. E. Grimston (London: Hakluyt Society, 1880), 409–410.

40 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §45, 299.

“great Tracts of Ground” in America were unclaimed, and so “still lie in common” available for English and European use and improvement.<sup>41</sup>

By not consenting to the use of money, the native inhabitants of America could only have very circumscribed and limited property and, more importantly, a tenuous political identity. This latter implication lay at the heart of the distinction Locke wanted to make between his own model of government by consent and the apparently consensual models of native American government. In the chapter entitled “Of the Beginning of Political Societies,” Locke argued that civil societies probably had their origin in the union of families ruled by patriarchs. This union was founded on the families’ natural liberty as expressed in their consenting to the election of persons best suited to rule. Locke bolstered his historical speculations with what he took to be the verification of ethnographic testimony: “Conformable hereunto,” Locke argued, “we find the People of *America*, who ... set up the stoutest and bravest man for their Ruler.” Quoting the opinions of the Jesuit missionary to Spanish America, José de Acosta, Locke writes:

he tells us, that in many parts of *America* there was no Government at all. *There are great and apparent conjectures*, says he, *that these men*, speaking of those of Peru, *for a long time had neither Kings nor Common-wealths, but lived in Troops, as they do this day in Florida, the Cheriquanas, those of Bresil, and many other Nations, which have no certain Kings, but as occasion is offered, in Peace or War, they choose their Captains as they please....* If it be said, that every Man there was born subject to his Father, or the head of his Family. That the subjection due from a Child to a Father, took not away his freedom of uniting into what Political Society he thought fit, has been already proved. But be that as it will, these Men, ‘tis evident, were actually *free*; and whatever superiority some Politicians now would place in any of them, they themselves claimed it not, but by consent were all *equal*, till by the same consent they set Rulers over themselves. So that their *Politic Societies* all *began* from a voluntary Union, and the mutual agreement of Men freely acting in the choice of their Governours, and forms of Government.<sup>42</sup>

In this remarkable passage, Locke conceded that on the evidence provided from America a viable and stable social and political order was possible without government, a condition he elsewhere denominated by the term “anarchy.”<sup>43</sup>

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41 Ibid.

42 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §102, 335.

43 At this time most Europeans had (at best) a very tenuous grasp of the complexities of Native American political organization, of the sexual division of labor and authority, of

In fact, Locke elevated this condition of anarchy into a universal postulate of human history demonstrating that inviolate natural freedom lies at the heart of all political development.

Crucially, Locke construed native American rulership as consensual. Although rulers were appointed or elected to rule according to the circumstances of peace and war, this election was a product of the members' freedom, not a badge of their slavery. As mentioned previously, Locke did not regard this argument as an exercise in supposition but as an authentic observation of the universal pattern of human historical progress:

Thus we see, that the *Kings of the Indians in America*, which is still a Pattern of the first Ages in *Asia* and *Europe*, whilst ... want of People and Money gave Men to Temptation to enlarge their Possessions ... are little more than *Generals of their Armies*; and though they command absolutely in War, yet at home and in time of Peace they exercise very little Dominion, and have but a very moderate Sovereignty, the Resolutions of Peace and War, being ordinarily either in the People, or in a Council.<sup>44</sup>

Significantly, Locke's description implied that native Americans had accomplished a viable separation of powers and retained the principle of popular consent. While this might seem amenable to Locke's argument for government by consent, he took great care to distinguish his own model of government by denigrating the native American model—for example, by identifying the chief's powers as all but absolute in times of war, but negligible in times of peace. By equating native American rulership with the powers of "generals of their armies," Locke employs a rhetorical strategy that contemporaries would have understood as a reference to the form of government said to exist in ancient Sparta: Lacedaemonian kingship.

Writing well before the anonymous publication of the *Two Treatises*, but around the time of its likely composition, Locke's friend, James Tyrell, argued that the native inhabitants of America possessed a viable but qualitatively inferior form of government comparable to that of the Lacedaemonian kings, a familiar trope in seventeenth and eighteenth-century British thought.<sup>45</sup>

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national and inter-national relations, and of the ceremonies of condolence and treaty-making. See for instance D.K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

44 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §108, 339–40.

45 James Tyrell, *Patriarcha Non Monarcha: The Patriarch Unmonarch'd: Being Observations on a Late Treatise and Divers Other Miscellanies, Published under the Name of Sir Robert Filmer Baronet* (London: R. Janeway, 1681), 76.

Lacedaemonian kingship had previously been described by the advocate of absolute monarchical power, Sir Robert Filmer, as a type of limited or mixed monarchy which, in his view, possessed only a dangerously defective kind of sovereignty.<sup>46</sup> For “republicans,” however, Lacedaemonian kingship was approvingly invoked because it represented a form of “free state” in which citizens’ participation in the making of laws secured their freedom.<sup>47</sup> According to the republican James Harrington, the Lacedaemonian polity illustrated how equality and martial virtue could underpin the liberty of its subjects.<sup>48</sup> As John Milton pointed out, moreover, the Lacedaemonian polity was one in which the ruler’s position and power was fully revocable, for, “everyone knows that the kings of Lacedaemon have often been brought to court and sometimes sentenced to death.”<sup>49</sup> Among a later generation of republicans, Walter Moyle argued that Lacedaemonian government was admirably devised to separate powers into a system of checks and balances that preserved their foundational “maxim, *that Liberty is the chiefest good of Civil Society...*”<sup>50</sup>

As Pocock points out, this form of government is based on popular involvement with the means of national defense, and thus its viability relied on a shared martial virtue that underpinned the unanimity of Spartan society.<sup>51</sup> In describing native American government as “Lacedaemonian,” Tyrell advanced a claim that the tribes so governed possessed a rude martial virtue and that their government was based on a form of direct popular consent that retained their liberty, sustained an approximate equality, and embodied a prescriptive and warlike moral code rather than a settled order of laws and offices protecting private property.

The power of a native American chief “in the *Caribbee Islands and Brasile*,” Tyrell maintained, was analogous to that of a “*Lacedaemonian King*” insofar as

46 Robert Filmer, “The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy” [1648], in *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. J.P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 157–158.

47 Q. Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 76.

48 James Harrington, “The Commonwealth of Oceana” [1656], in *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 110–111.

49 John Milton, “A Defence of the People of England” [1651], in *John Milton: Political Writings*, ed. M. Dzelzainis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 165.

50 Walter Moyle, “An Essay on the Lacedaemonian Government” [1698], in *The Whole Works of Walter Moyle, Esq.; that were published by himself*, ed. A. Hammond (London, 1727), 50, 59–60.

51 J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 415–417.

"the *Indians* ... chuse' who will be their Leaders in War, but in Peace [they] have little or no power."<sup>52</sup> Among Tyrell's (and Locke's) sources on the "Caribbees" was Charles Cesar de Rochefort, a French missionary to the New World, who claimed that "although the poor Barbarian" Caribbees "cannot be imagin'd to study much Policy" they did nonetheless have their own elected "petty Kings and Captains."<sup>53</sup> Rochefort argued that none of these petty Kings "hath any command over the whole Nation nor any superiority over other Captains," except in times of war, and "when the expedition is over, he hath no authority..."<sup>54</sup> Of crucial importance in Rochefort's account was that the election of these leaders was contingent upon their withstanding "strange and savage" rituals which conferred respect, from which he made the not insignificant deduction that "... this Worlds Honour, whatever it may be, Virtue excepted, consists only in Opinion and Custom, which differ, and sometimes clash, according to the diversity of Mens humours."<sup>55</sup>

This concession was significant in two senses. The first was that Rochefort construed native forms of government as being based on "custom." The implications of this view for indigenous peoples throughout the tortured history of European imperialism and colonization were indeed profound.<sup>56</sup> By being categorized as "customary," native government could also be dismissed as defective. The second implication, however, was that government itself could be understood as encompassing a spectrum of regulation and administration that is in many ways much broader than modern understandings. It was Locke himself who suggested in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that there were more forms of government than those which involved holding and exercising the powers of public office.<sup>57</sup> In sixteenth- and seventeenth- century European political thought, government could be understood as a function of office-holding which could be simultaneously private and public.<sup>58</sup> The activities of a public office holder (whether a county sheriff, a judge, or a colo-

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52 Tyrell, *Patriarcha*, 92.

53 Charles Cesar de Rochefort, *The History of the Caribby-Islands. In Two Books*, Book 1. (London, 1666), 116.

54 *Ibid.*, 314.

55 *Ibid.*, 316.

56 See, for example, B. Buchan, *The Empire of Political Thought: Indigenous Australians and the Language of Colonial Government* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008).

57 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [1690], ed. J. Yolton (London: J.M. Dent, 1970), 175. Here Locke referred to the "law of opinion" as a means of regulating conduct.

58 See for example, B. Buchan and L. Hill, *An Intellectual History of Political Corruption* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).



nial governor) might be construed as dependent on the virtues supposed to be exhibited in the fulfillment of private offices (as head of a household or master of slaves). In this sense, government could just as easily consist in the fulfillment of public duties (by enforcing laws, or collecting taxes) as it could in the regulation of religious communities by means of moral sanctions, or in the proprietary control of slave laborers, or in the paternal direction of families by chastising children or wives. It was with these kinds of government in mind that Tyrell refuted Hobbes' account of the state of nature and the latter's particular claim that the indigenous inhabitants of America exemplified it. Tyrell conceded that although native Americans had "no Civill Power to keep them in awe..." and exercised no "Government in time of Peace," they nonetheless achieved "Concord" by maintaining familial bonds and "having no riches."<sup>59</sup>

Tyrell's reference to the "absence of riches" signified the view that where a subsistence economy prevailed, there could be few distinctions of wealth and property, thus the desire for private gain would be limited, few crimes were possible, and few (if any) laws were needed. The forms of government that involved a hierarchy of public offices and a system of written laws—a system Tyrell designated as "Civill"—was a function of societies exhibiting a more sophisticated division of private property. In other words, "civil" government was premised on an unequal division of property requiring the regulation of conduct by laws, by public institutions of government, and by the norms of "civility." Indigenous government, like that of the Lacedaemonians, was premised on liberty, a rough equality, and the inculcation of a rude, martial virtue. It was with this understanding in mind that Locke invoked the analogy of native American chiefs to Lacedaemonian kings.

Although Locke's description of the delegated power of native American chiefs in *The Two Treatises* made it sound like a viable model of government by consent, it was in his terms a defective model of government. American government consisted solely in command in war, and, as Locke also put it, "in time of Peace" those chiefs exercised "very little Dominion..."<sup>60</sup> By using this phrase, Locke advanced the claim that, firstly, those chiefs possessed no right to dominion (or sovereign powers) in times of peace and thus did not constitute a government based on the promulgation of laws; and secondly, that native American chiefs did not possess or own (as their dominion) the lands upon which they and their tribes resided, thereby enabling European colonists—who alone were capable of establishing such a "dominion"—to take possession of these lands. Locke's Lacedaemonian imagery was therefore very far from a republican, much less a democratic, recommendation. It formed part of his

59 James Tyrell, *A Brief Disquisition of the Law of Nature* (London, 1701), 328–329.

60 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §108, 340.

rhetorical strategy of denigrating alternative models of apparently consensual government (in America and in Sparta) that hedged his own recommendation of a more circumscribed government by consent.

Locke's favored form of government was based on the idea that "Supream power" derived from the "consent" of property owners who together formed a civil society.<sup>61</sup> The "consent" on which this power hinged was fully revocable on condition that the government to which the citizens consented had breached the trust bestowed upon it by their consent.<sup>62</sup> To a late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English audience, this would have seemed a dangerous, if not revolutionary, doctrine.<sup>63</sup> For this reason, Locke was careful to distinguish his favored system of government not only from Filmer's absolutism, but also from the more dangerously anarchic systems of government that seemed to share with his a preference for popular consent. Hence Locke's repeated claim that his delegated "supream power" was completely different from alternate models, be they the ancient Lacedaemonian kings or contemporary native American chiefs. Even more problematic in Locke's view was the assumption and exercise of power by unauthorized groups such as bands of "Robbers and Pyrates," to whom I will now turn.<sup>64</sup>

### Of Pyrates

Locke referred to pirates only briefly in the *Two Treatises*, but he did so more than once. As with his references to anarchy and native American chiefs, his mention of pirates is revealing. As a one time Secretary to the Board of Trade during the "golden age" of European piracy (roughly from 1690–1730), Locke was engaged in a long-running campaign to eradicate pirates from preying upon Britain's (and its colonies') sea-going commerce.<sup>65</sup> It was in the context of this campaign that pirates came to be defined as that great fiction of international law, the *hostis humani generis*—the barbarous enemy whose very existence outside, and in defiance of, the law necessitated their elimination.

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61 Ibid., II, §131, 238.

62 For Locke of course, this consent need not be verbally expressed, but could simply be an unspoken or "tacit consent" signified by quietly living under and benefiting from the laws.

63 Tully, *An Approach*, 253–280.

64 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §176, 385.

65 On 12 September 1699, for instance, Locke signed a memorandum from the Board on the "Earl of Bellomont's Letter About Captain Kidd" that recommended an amnesty to all pirates operating off the coast of Britain's American colonies. See British National Archives, CO 324:7.

As pirates threaten the commerce of the seas, the property and lives of merchants, and the rights of nations to exchange and trade, it is hardly surprising that Locke would have taken this view. The threat they posed once again highlighted the distinction between his own model of limited consent and more anarchic forms of self-organization.

Locke first invoked the figure of the pirate in the "First Treatise," where he took aim at the notion that monarchical government derived its authority from divine dispensation. Locke argued that it would be impossible to identify the rightful holder of such a dispensation. Worse still, this notion served those rulers who made the spurious claim that their rulership demonstrated their divine authorization. Locke pointedly disdained any idea that the possession of power entitled the possessor to be regarded as a rightful ruler. If this were the case then "there would be no distinction between Pirates and Lawful Princes ... and Crowns and Sceptres would become the Inheritance only of Violence and Rapine."<sup>66</sup> Here Locke invoked the image, already well-established in European political thought, of the pirate as the incarnation of coercive, violent power without any title or justification. The pirate was the direct opposite of the legitimate ruler who upheld the laws, defended property, and served justice on malefactors.<sup>67</sup>

Nonetheless, previous political thinkers from St. Augustine to Thomas Hobbes had noted the more than passing resemblance between pirates and sovereigns, and worried that the moral or spiritual grounds that normatively distinguished the sovereign's powers from the pirate's plundering might just be illusory, or at the very least historically contingent.<sup>68</sup> As he makes clear in the "Second Treatise," however, Locke had no truck with these concerns and summarily dismissed the idea that war or conquest, violence or aggression, even that sanctified by the passage of time, could ever be the foundation for the rightful exercise of power. Otherwise, he maintained, "Robbers and Pyrates have a Right of Empire over whomsoever they have Force enough to master..."<sup>69</sup> Rightful power over the lives and liberties of subjects, Locke argued, can only rest on "*the Consent of the People*" that established a means of arbitrating or umpiring disputes and did not depend on the extortion of obedience.<sup>70</sup> Thus

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66 Locke, *Two Treatises*, I, §81, 203.

67 A. Dilts, "To Kill a Thief: Punishment, Proportionality, and Criminal Subjectivity in Locke's Second Treatise," *Political Theory* 40, no. 1 (2012): 58–83.

68 P. Hayes, "Pirates, Privateers and the Contract Theories of Hobbes and Locke," *History of Political Thought* 29, no. 3 (2008): 461–484.

69 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §176, 385.

70 *Ibid.*, II, §175, 384.

far, Locke's logic seems clear enough. His argument proceeds by contrasting rightful power or authority with the typical image of the terrorizing pirate, the *hostis humani generis*, the enemy of all (hu)mankind, with whom no compacts were possible—a detestable subject to be entirely extirpated by any means.<sup>71</sup>

Locke complicated this logic in another reference to pirates, this time in the context of defending his own argument for a limited right to rebellion. For Locke, government by consent was revocable only when the impositions of a tyrannical government became so great that it placed itself into a state of war with its own people. In such cases, the people may legitimately rebel and replace their government.<sup>72</sup> To deny such a right, Locke argued, would be to argue that “honest” subjects “may not oppose Robbers or Pirates.”<sup>73</sup> Locke's final, if tangential, reference to piracy in the *Two Treatises* elaborated this point in reference to the time-worn “ship of state” metaphor. In Locke's hands, however, the metaphor was given an unusual twist by likening the subject of a state drifting toward tyranny to a passenger aboard a “Ship ... carrying him, and the rest of the Company to *Algiers*.”<sup>74</sup>

The significance of this reference would not have been lost on contemporaries for whom the port city of Algiers on the North African coast was a well-known resort of Barbary corsairs.<sup>75</sup> These pirates, both African Muslims and Europeans, operated raids from the north coast of Africa on European shipping and even on British coastal communities.<sup>76</sup> In order to contextualize Locke's reference, however, it is important to note that one of the corsair's chief objectives was to take captives for sale into slavery as galley slaves or domestic servants, estimated to have numbered in the thousands from Britain alone in the early decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>77</sup> Hence the significance of Locke's analogy. Passively watching a state drift toward tyranny was akin to the position of captives knowing that their ship was destined for Algiers, and they for slavery. Both captive and subject were bound for intolerable slavery at the hands of a power no more legitimate than that of a mere pirate. Moreover—and this was the burden of Locke's metaphor—neither captive nor subject

71 D. Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* (New York: Zone Books, 2009), 152–4.

72 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §196–208, 396–404.

73 *Ibid.*, II, §228, 417.

74 *Ibid.*, II, §210, 405.

75 C. Lloyd, *English Corsairs on the Barbary Coast* (London: Collins, 1981), 94.

76 A. Talbot, “The Great Ocean of Knowledge”: *The Influence of Travel Literature on the Work of John Locke* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 305. See also Lloyd, *English Corsairs*, 65–66.

77 L. Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 50.

should be deceived that the temporary setbacks or illusory concessions made along the path to tyranny had any greater bearing on the final destination than the cross winds that occasionally beset the corsair's galley.

With this simple metaphor Locke did something quite unexpected by reversing the logic of his previous references to piracy. In those earlier references, pirates served as a negative example of the chaotic violence and force to which one lay exposed in the absence of political authority in the state of nature. In this new formulation, however, Locke's argument compares the pirate to rulers who, by their tyrannical "usurpations," deserved to be considered the "common Enemy and Pest of Mankind."<sup>78</sup> By using this significant phrase, Locke equated tyrants and pirates and thus echoed a much older, classical Roman understanding in which both tyrant and pirate could be described as "*hostis humani generis*" or "*communis hostis omnium*."<sup>79</sup> For Locke, though, it seems that tyrants constituted the real threat and were thus the genuine "common enemy and pest" of humankind. In this way, pirates and piracy were employed in the text as an analogy for the "danger" to the "Laws ... Estates, Liberties and Lives" of subjects caused by misgovernment.<sup>80</sup>

Seen in this light, Locke's passing references to pirates seem all the more curious. Resorting not only to then standard tropes of the pirate as outlaw, the pirate as violent plunderer, the pirate as faithless extortionist with whom no promises can be kept, Locke also saw pirates as an analogy for misgovernment. Unlike his passing comparisons between native American chiefs and Lacedaemonian kings, which offer a vision of egalitarian liberty carried to the extreme of almost non-existent government, Locke's pirates represented another extreme of usurped and tyrannical power. Contemporaneous accounts of the organization of pirate crews and communities in the Caribbean, Pacific, and Indian Oceans provide ample evidence that pirates actually exemplified, if anything, a viable model of consensual Lockean political organization.<sup>81</sup> One scholar has gone so far as to declare that these piratical communities, insofar as they were based on democratic agreements concerning the basic rules of their political association, represented "the 'holy grail' of social contract

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<sup>78</sup> Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §230, 418.

<sup>79</sup> H.D. Gould, "Cicero's Ghost: Rethinking the Social Construction of Piracy," in *Maritime Piracy and the Construction of Global Governance*, eds. M. Struett, J. Carlson, and M. Nance (London: Routledge, 2012), 25.

<sup>80</sup> Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §209, 404–405.

<sup>81</sup> Hayes, "Pirates, Privateers and the Contract Theories of Hobbes and Locke."

theory.”<sup>82</sup> So democratic were these agreements, it has been asserted, that they offer a blueprint of anarchist self-organization.<sup>83</sup>

In his earliest writings, however, Locke equated piracy with the tyranny of power based on naked force. In his *Essays on the Laws of Nature*, written while he was still in Oxford in the early 1660s, Locke referred briefly to pirates as an example of the natural diversity of moral opinion anciently prevailing among human communities. This natural moral diversity was the only explanation as to why many ancient “nations have professedly been pirates and robbers”—a fact self-evidently demonstrating that there was no general consent among humans on the nature of justice, as Grotius had suggested.<sup>84</sup> This was an entirely conventional condemnation of piracy as mere robbery, as being based only on force and fear, and as an activity primarily exhibited by families, gangs, and even nations in the archaic past.<sup>85</sup> Locke’s purpose, however, was to use piracy as a convenient analogue for illegitimate power over another, in contrast to the legitimate power of rulers who are obeyed “for conscience’ sake, because a king has command over us by right.”<sup>86</sup> Locke’s purpose in so arguing, as Daniel Carey has so eloquently shown, was to suggest that reason alone (rather than immemorial custom or convention) served as the means of discovering the nature of justice and morality.<sup>87</sup> For this reason, Locke took a serious, life-long interest in “travel literature” as the best way to gain what might be termed an ethnographic insight into the variety of circumstances under which humans have exercised their reason, and the diverse conclusions to which their reason led them.

Locke’s evident interest in ethnographic writings provided one possible avenue through which he may have been exposed later in his career to first-hand accounts of the politics of piratical communities in the Caribbean. Indeed, Locke would have had the chance to familiarize himself with pirate commonwealths throughout the time he continued to work on his *Two Treatises*.<sup>88</sup>

82 P.T. Leeson, “The Calculus of Piratical Consent: the Myth of the Myth of Social Contract,” *Public Choice* 139 (2009): 445.

83 See, for example, P.T. Leeson, “An-aargh-chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization,” *Journal of Political Economy* 115, no. 6 (2007): 1049–1094.

84 John Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature; the Latin Text with a Translation, Introduction and Notes* [1660–64], ed. W. von Leyden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 169.

85 This was, for example, how Hobbes referred to pirates. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II, §xvii, 118.

86 Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature*, 185, 189.

87 D. Carey, “The Problem of Sati: John Locke’s Moral Anthropology and the Foundations of Natural Law,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 18, nos. 1–2 (2014): 79–80.

88 On the publication history, see Laslett’s introduction to Locke’s *Two Treatises*, 8–9.

Although originally published in 1689–90, Locke was unhappy with this edition and continued to refine the work. Further editions appeared in 1694 and 1698, and he left instructions with his executors for a further edition after his death in 1704. Throughout these years Locke had ample opportunity to learn about piracy. Through his involvement in the Board of Trade it was likely that he had the chance to meet the erstwhile pirates and privateers William Dampier and Lionel Wafer.<sup>89</sup> Both claimed to have served in privateer crews under Letters of Marque from their sovereign to raid the ships of his Spanish and French enemies. But both also joined one of the various parties of buccaneers who raided Spanish ships and communities on their own piratical account on the Pacific and Caribbean coast of the Isthmus of Panama. Locke owned copies of both Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* (1697) and Wafer's *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), which spoke of some of their piratical experiences.<sup>90</sup> More importantly, Locke also possessed the 1695 and 1699 editions of Alexandre Exquemelin's *The Buccaneers of America*, the latter of which also contained the published journal of Basil Ringrose, another English buccaneer and companion of Dampier and Wafer. Although it was subsequently overshadowed by Captain Charles Johnson's *General History of the Pyrates*, published in 1724, Exquemelin's book was probably the most fullsome account of pirate political organization available in Locke's lifetime. That account provided strong indications that pirates practiced an extreme form of democratic self-organization.

According to Exquemelin, the buccaneers made decisions about the direction of their voyages and raids in "Council," wherein "they agree upon certain Articles which are put in writing, by way of Bond or Obligation, which every one is bound to observe."<sup>91</sup> The Captain and other office-bearers of the pirate vessels were also elected by common vote, and their dismissal could just as easily be accomplished by the same means. William Dampier also noted that

89 A Board memorandum of 6 July 1697 records the copying of Dampier's and Wafer's accounts of "the Isthmus of Darien," where the Scottish East India Company was intending to form a settlement. See British National Archives, CO 324:7. See also D. and M. Preston, *A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: The Life of William Dampier, Explorer, Naturalist and Buccaneer* (London: Doubleday, 2004), 245, 248.

90 J. Harrison and P. Laslett, *The Library of John Locke*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 511, 512, 910, 2485, 3121. See also Talbot, "The Great Ocean of Knowledge," 238.

91 All quotes from Exquemelin will be made from the second (1695) edition as follows: John Esquemeling [Alexandre Exquemelin], *The History of the Bucaniers of America; Or, a True Account of the Most Remarkable Assaults, Committed (of Late Years) upon the Coasts of The West Indies, by the Bucaniers of Jamaica and Tortuga*, 2nd edition (London: William Whitwood, 1695), part 1, 42.

captains were seconded by a Quartermaster who held “the second Place in the Ship according to the Law of Privateers.”<sup>92</sup> All booty taken on their raids was passed into “the common stock” and divided by equitable shares, which also included compensation for the sick and injured.<sup>93</sup> Any pirate who looted for himself and did not abide by the crew’s agreement to contribute what they took to the joint stock was expelled, or worse. Exquemelin was clear that by these means the buccaneers maintained a “very good order” and a “civil and charitable” ethos among themselves, even though they exercised a fearsome and pitiless violence against their victims.<sup>94</sup> The order maintained among these self-organized communities was egalitarian and democratic, but it could often be brutal and short-lived.

If Locke consulted Exquemelin at all while revising the *Two Treatises*, however, it is hard to imagine that he took much else from it than the sensational stories of cruel atrocities, ambushes, tortures, lootings, and sackings committed by the ferociously anti-Spanish buccaneer captain L’Ollonais.<sup>95</sup> One of the features of piracy that Locke emphasized was that pirates were those with whom no faith could be kept. This was a key feature of the discourse on piracy in Western legal and political thought, and it had venerable ancient Roman roots.<sup>96</sup> Pirates not only placed themselves beyond the reach of laws, but also defied those very laws by claiming a right to act on their own account. Therefore, they could not be trusted to keep their bargains. No feature of piracy could be more redolent of this defiance of moral and legal authority than the practice of piratical oath-making and oath-taking.

In early modern political and legal discourse, oaths had a double meaning. Oaths were made not only in abusive “swearing,” but in the formal solemnities of “swearing in.” In this latter sense, oaths were pledges or promises of trust, truthfulness, and fidelity made under the divine authority of God or the secular authority of law.<sup>97</sup> Oath-taking on assuming public office or in giving legal testimony was therefore a testament of veracity validated by divine and political hierarchy. These oaths were verbal symbols of the ideal of liberty Locke recommended—a liberty underwritten by divine, legal, and political sanctions.

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92 William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* [1697], ed. M. Beken (London: Hummingbird Press, 1998), 41.

93 Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers*, part I, 42.

94 *Ibid.*, part I, 43.

95 *Ibid.*, part II, 1–25.

96 See Gould, “Cicero’s Ghost.”

97 C. Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: The Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).



This was precisely the sense in which Locke spoke of oaths of allegiance and obligation marking the transition of subjects from child to “free” adult:

Common-wealths ... allow that there is *a time when Men are to begin to act like Free Men*, and therefore till that time require not Oaths of Fealty, or Allegiance, or other publick owning of, or Submission to the Government of their Countreys.<sup>98</sup>

Pirate oaths, in contrast, can be understood as deliberately subversive, marking their discourse as both uncivil and illegal under existing British statutes (which imposed fines for public swearing), and thus freely made in defiance of authority. Pirate oaths were thus the most “uncivil” of vocal expressions because they were not made to affirm a hierarchy of moral, spiritual, or political authority. Rather, they affirmed the radical autonomy of the individual from those hierarchies. Pirate oaths, like those of the cruel and “sacrilegious” L'Ollonais, affirmed individual judgment as the sole criterion by disdaining God's authority. Thus, when that “cruel Tyrant” thought he had been led astray in the jungle by his Spanish captives, he swore “with great choler and indignation: *Mort Dieu, les Espagnols me le payeront: By Gods Death, the Spaniards shall pay me for this.*”<sup>99</sup>

If Locke ever saw such instances as evidence for his own view of piracy, he overlooked Exquemelin's counter-examples. Even the pitiless L'Ollonais was said to have given his word to the request of some Spanish inhabitants of a besieged town to be given two hours to evacuate their families and goods.<sup>100</sup> The two hours being given and scrupulously obeyed for the duration, the poor Spaniards were nonetheless looted upon the expiry of time! More significant, perhaps, is the emphatic evidence that oaths among the pirates themselves were considered as binding on the individual pirate as any sacred promise. Exquemelin described the buccaneers of the Caribbean adopting the practice of making a “solemn Oath” that all their pillaged goods were surrendered for redistribution according to the system of shares, and should any of them be found to have “contraven'd the said Oath, immediately he is separated and turned out of the society.”<sup>101</sup> Here is unequivocal evidence of the egalitarianism and unforced consent of pirate political order. Pirate order did not only consist in pure rebellion, or in sacrilegious oath-making, or extortionate robbery, but

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98 Locke, *Two Treatises*, II, §62, 309.

99 Exquemelin, *The Bucaniers*, part II, 20.

100 Ibid., part II, 21.

101 Ibid., part I, 43.

in the reconstitution of an egalitarian and libertarian social and political structure based on consent and agreement more radical than Locke could abide.

In the framing of the alternatives that hedged his strictly limited model of government by consent, Locke was keen to contrast his politics from those of a more “anarchic” hue. In limiting government by consent to a select few, Locke’s thought was not animated by democratic aspirations, but by an overriding concern to balance a right to rebellion with the need for security. This concern took shape in the campaign of England’s Whiggish elite, for whom Locke worked, to secure a pliable Protestant successor to the throne. The *Two Treatises* were originally conceived and composed, but never published, in the context of the “Exclusion Crisis” of 1679–81. At that time, Locke’s patron, the Earl of Shaftesbury, led a Parliamentary and propaganda campaign to have a bill passed that would exclude King Charles II’s Catholic brother and heir, James, from succession to the throne. Locke continued to refine the manuscript and eventually published it anonymously much later, in the wake of the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688–90 that succeeded in deposing the then King James II and replacing him with his Protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband William, Prince of Orange. The publication of Locke’s text apparently provided a justification for this rebellion and deposition.<sup>102</sup> But the text trod a fine line between revolution and security, as Locke himself acknowledged in attempting to construe the right to rebellion as a limited and last resort. The Whiggish elite had learned the lesson from Britain’s earlier Civil War and Commonwealth government (1642–1660) that the common people desired and would fight for their own liberty and democratic rights that were much more expansive than the property-owning elite were willing to allow. Their aim was for a controlled rebellion that provided ample security for their lives, their liberties, their estates, and their privileges. The Glorious Revolution was their attempt to secure the state that would secure them, and by so doing protect and project Britain’s colonial and maritime commerce.

It is therefore significant that at the very time Locke was finalizing his *Two Treatises* piracy presented one of the first serious legal challenges to the new regime he had worked to establish. This challenge was finally resolved by force only a few years after the appearance of the *Two Treatises*. King James II’s ill-fated attempt to win back his throne by force of arms in Ireland ended with a capitulation in 1691 to the victors that allowed him to withdraw his troops and supplies to France. By the Treaty of Limerick, he and his army were accorded the honor of defeated enemies at war and, for those captured, rights as prisoners of war. As he and his forces prepared to withdraw, James determined

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102 See Laslett’s introduction to Locke, *Two Treatises*, 45–7.

to strike back by issuing commissions, Letters of Marque, to some of his Irish officers to act as privateers against British shipping. Among James' motivations for doing so was clearly to continue the war by a profitable means that also demonstrated his claim to sovereign status by issuing commissions.<sup>103</sup> For the new government at Westminster, this claim had to be denied outright, for a new and invited sovereign now sat upon the throne James had vacated.

As John Bromley has demonstrated, the capture and trial of a handful of these captains in 1692–93 took place in a hostile atmosphere fed by fevered computations that their raids cost British trade as much as £3 million.<sup>104</sup> The Advocate of the Fleet, Dr. William Oldys (or Oldish), was briefed to prosecute the captains as pirates, which he refused to do on the grounds that these defendants were not the “common enemies to all mankind” but “privateers” acting under the “colourable authority remaining in King James.”<sup>105</sup> Oldys' objection was taken sufficiently seriously by the Lords of the Admiralty that he was summarily dismissed and replaced by the Deputy Judge Advocate, Matthew Tindal. Tindal had no scruples about trying the men as pirates. His prosecutorial arguments in 1692 resulted in the conviction of the officers, some of whom were hung and their bodies displayed in gibbets between low and high tide marks on the Thames as a warning to others. In 1694, Tindal amplified his arguments in a publication that was to become a seminal work on piracy in international law. Tindal argued that James had no claim to be regarded as a sovereign, having abdicated his throne and its prerogatives, and thus he could not issue valid privateering commissions.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the “Certainties” on which the law of nations was founded mandated freedom of the seas and security of commerce, requiring the assertion of sovereignty over and above the spurious claims made by an “unkinged” monarch who had now “dwindled” to become not just a private person, but a mere “pirate” who no longer possessed the sovereign right to declare war and peace.<sup>107</sup> In this formulation, Tindal appeared to echo Locke's curious association of the figures of the tyrant and the pirate. What lay at issue, as Tindal made clear, was not simply the prosecution of a handful of *hostes*

103 J. Bromley, *Corsairs and Navies, 1660–1760* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1987), 155.

104 *Ibid.*, 159–160.

105 T.B. Howell, ed., *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Vol. XII, A.D. 1687–1696 (London: T.C. Hansard, 1812), 1269–1270.

106 Matthew Tindal, *An Essay Concerning the Laws of Nations and the Rights of Sovereigns, with an account of what was said at the Council-Board by the Civilians upon the Question, Whether their Majesty's Subjects Taken at Sea acting by the Late King's Commission, Might not be Looked on as Pirates ...* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1694), 18–20.

107 *Ibid.*, 16, 19.

*humani generis*, but the de-legitimation of a sovereign who represented to the new English government a threat so eloquently defined in Locke's memorable phrase, "the common pest and enemy of all mankind."<sup>108</sup>

## Conclusion

Andrew Dilts has recently argued that the question of the appropriate punishment for those who transgress, renounce, or live beyond divine, moral, and human law has shaped the Western "canon of political theory."<sup>109</sup> The figure of the pirate, like that of the American "savage," is a "source of physical and ontological threat" to the law-abiding inhabitants of civil society; the pirate is one of those "liminal figures that haunt the boundaries of membership [of civil society] and the border between the law of reason and the law of beasts..." Seen in this light, the rhetorical purpose of Locke's references to piracy and to native American chiefs in the *Two Treatises* served as negative examples against which to define "the obedient subject [of civil society] as rational, innocent, and, above all, free."<sup>110</sup> I have argued in this chapter for a slightly different view. In effect, native American chiefs represented a dangerously anarchic lack of government, a Lacedaemonian liberty that threatened to undermine security. Pirates, on the other hand, served an alternate purpose to position the tyrant as the common pest of humankind, and deserving of rebellion. By referring to native American chiefs and pirates in these ways, Locke buttressed his own recommendation of government by circumscribed consent.

While Locke claimed to have based his knowledge of native American chiefs on the testimony of European observers, he made no such claims about his knowledge of pirates. The exact sources of Locke's views on piracy remain mysterious, although we can be sure that he had access to contemporary testimony at least as good as his "ethnographic" sources on America. Locke's construction of piracy is therefore especially curious. Contemporary scholars have emphasized the positively "anarchic" features of piratical political organization—in their rationality, their emphasis on consent, and the premium they placed on

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108 Locke and Tindal were acquainted and Locke had copies of all Tindal's published works in his own library, leading to the supposition that Locke "approved" of Tindal's arguments. See S. Lalor, *Matthew Tindal, Freethinker: an Eighteenth-Century Assault on Religion* (London: Continuum, 2006), 29.

109 Dilts, "To Kill a Thief," 60, and following quote from 61.

110 *Ibid.*, 72.

liberty above security.<sup>111</sup> Such features could not have been a recommendation to Locke. He spoke of “anarchy” as insecurity caused by an absence of government. Through an examination of his thought and its contexts, however, we can catch a glimpse of more extensive and viable models of popular consent in the era before “anarchism.” By doing so, we can also appreciate just how much more conservative Locke’s own model of consent was—a model so repeatedly elevated to canonical status within the “liberal” tradition. Locke of course would not have understood the designation of pirates or of native American chiefs as representatives of an anarchist model of political organization. What he would have recognized is their designation as forms of Lacedaemonian kingship—of a dangerously limited form of rule based on the natural freedom and consent of its members.

Locke himself did not designate the organization of pirates as Lacedaemonian, but among his near contemporaries this is precisely how they were understood. Within two decades of Locke’s death, Captain Charles Johnson’s *General History of the Pyrates* (1724) spoke of the election of both pirate captains and Quartermasters by common consent as constituting their “roguish commonwealth.”<sup>112</sup> Here was precisely an echo of the same distinction Locke made between the extensive military powers in war but negligible civil jurisdiction of native American chiefs. The quartermaster was described as a kind of “civil Magistrate” responsible for enforcing the rules and maintaining order, acting as “Trustee for the whole.” The captain, in contrast, was the “military officer” whose command was “uncontroullable in Chace, or in Battle,” but strictly limited otherwise, by “the anarchy and unrulyness of the Members. Why truly ... they only permit him to be Captain, on Condition, that they may be Captain over him.”<sup>113</sup>

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111 See in particular the articles by Leeson quoted above.

112 C. Johnson, *A General History of the Pyrates, From their first Rise and Settlement, in the Island of Providence, to the present Time*, 2nd edition (London: T. Warner, 1724), 233–235.

113 *Ibid.*, 234.

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## Anarchism and Markets

*Kevin Carson*

### Introduction

Anarchism, as Peter Kropotkin defined it in his 1910 article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, is the advocacy of a stateless social order in which “harmony [is] obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being.”<sup>1</sup> In such a society, “the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the state in all its functions.”<sup>2</sup> Market anarchism—a branch of the classical anarchist movement whose origins closely overlap with those of individualist anarchism—falls within this definition.<sup>3</sup> The latter was part of the radical wing of classical liberalism, and tended to a greater or lesser degree towards anti-capitalism. Classical liberalism and the socialist movement were both direct outgrowths of the Enlightenment, and the roots of individualist anarchism and market anarchism are heavily entangled in the early history of both movements.

My focus here will be primarily on the British and American liberal roots of market anarchism rather than Continental thinkers like Comte, Saint-Simon or Molinari, as this is the aspect of the tradition with which I am the most familiar. Their main influence on Anglo-American market anarchism, arguably, was indirectly through Proudhon.

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1 Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchism,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition (New York: The Encyclopedia Britannica Co., 1910), 914.

2 Ibid.

3 In using the term “market anarchism,” I am not referring to advocacy of a social order based primarily on business firms and the cash nexus, but to assorted schools of “anarchism without adjectives” which accept voluntary exchange as part of the mix. I am quite open to the possibility that the majority of economic functions in such a society would actually be carried out in autarkic cohousing projects and other primary social units, communist collectives, or gift economies.

From the beginning, classical liberalism had a radical wing whose members—including figures like William Godwin and Thomas Paine—not only critiqued the economic power of the landed classes and chartered monopolists, but proposed land nationalization and other radical land reforms as well. As outgrowths of this radical wing of classical liberalism, individualist anarchism and market anarchism had a more petty bourgeois orientation, reflecting the interests of small craftsmen and dispossessed independent peasants, than the mainstream (which was comparatively more aligned with rising industrial interests). They arose as part of the broad current of working class radicalism in England, an arc that extended roughly from the publication of Paine's *Rights of Man* and the organization of the first Societies of Correspondence in the 1790s to the Chartist movement.

Thousands upon thousands of working people belonged to reading and debating societies, where radical newspapers and pamphlets were discussed, as well as the works of thinkers like Paine and Cobbett. They included small tradesmen, who were being robbed of their independence by the ascendancy of the factory system. As E.P. Thompson notes, the early working class movement was powerfully shaped by the sensibilities of urban artisans and weavers who combined a “sense of lost status” with “memories of their golden age.”<sup>4</sup> The weavers in particular carried a strong communitarian and egalitarian sensibility, basing their radicalism, “whether voiced in Owenite or biblical language,” on “essential rights and elementary notions of human fellowship and conduct.”<sup>5</sup> Thompson continues:

It was as a whole community that they demanded betterment, and utopian notions of redesigning society anew at a stroke—Owenite communities, the universal general strike, the Chartist Land Plan—swept through them like fire on the common. But essentially the dream which arose in many different forms was the same—a community of independent small producers, exchanging their products without the distortions of masters and middlemen.<sup>6</sup>

The Jacobin-influenced radicalism of the 1790s saw exploitation largely in terms of taxation and seigniorial landlordism, making only a vague distinction between rent and taxation. It also stressed the ideal of widespread small property ownership and the inequity of concentrating property ownership in

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4 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 295.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 295.

the hands of a few non-producers—themes persisting through Owenist and Chartist times.

The radicalism of the 1790s survived in the thought of figures like Thelwall, Cobbett, and above all Thomas Spence, who, as E.P. Thompson said of Thelwall, “took Jacobinism to the borders of Socialism.”<sup>7</sup> Spence, a self-taught school teacher of Scottish Calvinist origins, left his mark on the London Corresponding Society. He, not Owen, first created a theoretical mutualism based on his readings of the Bible, Locke, and Harrington. Much of later Owenism was really Spencean in origin. He called for the destruction of

not only personal and hereditary Lordship, but the cause of them, which is Private Property in Land ... a few Contingent Parishes have only to declare the land to be theirs and form a convention of Parochial Delegates. Other adjacent Parishes would ... follow the example, and send also their Delegates and thus would a beautiful and powerful New Republic instantaneously arise in full vigor.<sup>8</sup>

He also favored control of large-scale production by worker-owned joint-stock companies.<sup>9</sup> After Spence died in 1814 the movement continued to advocate that “all feudality or lordship in the soil be abolished, and the territory declared to be the people’s common farm,” a policy which Thompson described as “preparing the minds of artisans for the acceptance of Owen’s *New View of Society*.”<sup>10</sup> G.D.H. Cole identified the “tiny sect of Spenceans” as “the only organized body of Socialists” in 1815.<sup>11</sup> It was the development of such thinking that laid the groundwork for Owenite mutualism; arguably it used Owenism as its vehicle.

In both Britain and America, the main significance of Owenism lay not in the paternalistic career of Owen himself, but in the working class Owenite movement that developed his theoretical ideas and practice under its own direction. It was not until the 1820s that Owenist thought was diffused among the working classes, largely with the help of working class interpreters. And when workers put Owenist ideas into practice on their own terms, Owen found himself fighting to avoid being left behind. Most importantly for Owenite practice

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7 Ibid., 160.

8 Ibid., 161–162.

9 M. Chase, *The People’s Farm: English Radical Agrarianism, 1775–1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 28.

10 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 613–614.

11 G.D.H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789–1947* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1948), 52.

was his theory of exchange based on labor, later adopted by the cooperative movement as “labour notes.” There was also a flourishing Owenite trade union federation in the 1820s and 1830s, along with cooperative workshops where striking workers set up independent craft production for labor note exchange in cooperative bazaars.

The classical political economy of Smith and Ricardo, meanwhile, was taken in a radical direction from the 1820s on by the so-called Ricardian Socialists, who drew radical conclusions from Ricardo’s doctrine that rent and profit were deductions from exchange value created by labor. The socialist, cooperativist, and anarchist (including market anarchist) movements all emerged from the cross-pollination between working class Owenism and radical political economy from the 1820s on. This fusion is illustrated especially by Thomas Hodgskin in Britain and by Josiah Warren and the subsequent individualist movement in America.

### Thomas Hodgskin (1787–1869)

Ironically, the mainstream of classical political economy was beginning to shift to the right around the same time it started to spin off radical thinkers like Hodgskin and the individualists. With the political triumph of industrial capital in Britain and America, mainline classical liberalism moved from its earlier critique of the Whig landed interests and mercantilists to an apologetic position which Marx characterized as “vulgar political economy.” From the 1840s on, the mainstream of classical political economists acted largely as “hired prizefighters” on behalf of politically triumphant industrial capitalists. Nevertheless the radical wing persisted as a critique of the mainstream, judging the latter by a consistent application of its own professed values.

Quoting Marx’s *Value, Price and Profit*, Maurice Dobb argues that a valid theory of profit “must start from the theorem that, on an average, commodities are *sold at their real value*, and that *profits are derived from selling them at their values....* If you cannot explain profit upon this supposition, you cannot explain it at all.” As Dobb further notes:

The point of this can the better be appreciated if it is remembered that the school of writers to whom the name of the Ricardian Socialists has been given ... who can be said to have held a “primitive” theory of exploitation, explained profit on capital as the product of superior bargaining power, lack of competition and “unequal exchanges between Capital and Labour”.... This was the kind of explanation that Marx was avoiding

rather than seeking. It did *not* make exploitation *consistent* with the law of value and with market competition, but explained it by departures from, or imperfections in, the latter. To it there was an easy answer from the liberal economists and free traders: namely, “join with us in demanding *really* free trade and then there can be no “unequal exchanges” and “exploitation”.<sup>12</sup>

Dobb’s “easy answer” was exactly the approach taken not only by Hodgskin (conventionally lumped in with the Ricardian Socialists despite actually being a radical disciple of Smith), but by the individualist anarchists of America and most other 19th century market anarchists. Hodgskin was one of several radical political economists in the 1820s that appropriated and expanded on Owenite economic theory, combining it with a radical interpretation of Smith and Ricardo. This answer was hardly “easy” in the sense of serving as a facile defense of the capitalist social order, as Dobb implied; “*really* free trade,” as Hodgskin and the individualists saw it, would entail the abolition of most landlord rent and interest as well as profit on capital other than short-term entrepreneurial profit. A central theme of classical market anarchism was that capitalism cannot stand up to free market critique.

Hodgskin and the other radicals shared Ricardo’s understanding of profit and rent as deductions from a pool of exchange-value created by labor. They saw capitalism as a system of political economy in which the state intervened in the market on behalf of landlords, capitalists, and other monopolists to enforce the privileges by which they extracted rents from labor. Hodgskin was the founder of *Mechanics Magazine*, and was actively involved in the movement of the 1820s to create mechanics’ institutes, self-managed by workers and supported with their own money.<sup>13</sup> In 1825 he published *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital*, a defense of the right of workers to combine in trade unions. The pamphlet begins by accepting the labor theory of value articulated by Ricardo and other classical political economists and argues on its basis that workers should receive their full product. This was the first complete statement of an idea that was to be common to the whole socialist movement (it was in the 1820s, by the way, that the term “socialism” first appeared in print in an issue of the *London Co-operative Magazine*).

In conjunction with the labor theory, Hodgskin articulated a surplus value theory of exploitation:

12 M. Dobb, Introduction to *Karl Marx’s Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. M. Dobb (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 13.

13 Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement*, 57.

The *real price* of a coat or a pair of shoes or a loaf of bread ... is a certain quantity of labour.... But for the *labourer* to have either of these articles he must give over and above the quantity of labour nature demands from him, a still larger quantity to the capitalist ... If labor were free, he wrote, the relative portion of the collective produce allocated to each worker, and to each trade, "would be justly settled by what Dr. Smith calls the 'higgling of the market.'"<sup>14</sup>

Hodgskin made the crucial distinction between natural and artificial rights of property. Natural property rights are simply "a man's right to the free use of his own mind and limbs, and to appropriate whatever he creates by his own labour."<sup>15</sup> By natural right of property, he meant "the right of individuals, to have and to own, for their own separate and selfish use and enjoyment, the produce of their own industry, with power freely to dispose of the whole of that in the manner most agreeable to themselves."<sup>16</sup> This right, established by the "continual possession and use by one person of any one thing," was founded in nature. It resulted from the need of labor to satisfy human wants in the natural order of things as well as from the extension of individuality to that which the individual creates through his or her labor.<sup>17</sup>

Artificial rights, he said, concern "the power of throwing the necessity to labour off [one's] own shoulders ... by the appropriation of other men's produce" and "[t]he power ... possessed by idle men to appropriate the produce of labourers."<sup>18</sup> "Certain classes"—including the recipients of rent, profit, and taxes—"do not labour." The slave-holders of the West Indies, the "landlords and fund holders of England ... are all subsisted and supported, supplied with all their wealth, by the labour of the slaves in the West Indies, or of the toil-worn and half-starved slave-descended labourers of Europe."<sup>19</sup> Social regulations and commercial prohibitions, Hodgskin maintained, "compel us to employ more labour than is necessary to obtain the prohibited commodity," or "to give a greater quantity of labour to obtain it than nature requires," and

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14 G. Claeys, Introduction to *Selected Works of Robert Owen*, ed. G. Claeys (London: William Pickering, 1993), xviii.

15 Thomas Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy: Four Lectures Delivered at the London Mechanics' Institution* (London: Charles and William Tait, 1827), 236–237.

16 Thomas Hodgskin, "Letter the Second: The Natural Right of Property Illustrated," in *The Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted* (London: B. Steil, 1832), 24.

17 *Ibid.*, 35.

18 Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, 30, 237.

19 *Ibid.*, 29–30.

put the difference into the pockets of privileged classes.<sup>20</sup> Hodgskin ridiculed those who wanted to “preserve ... inviolate” the “existing right of property” or to hold it “sacred against the claims of the labourer to own whatever and all which he produces.”<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere he writes:

Law and governments are intended, and always have been intended, to establish and protect a right of property, different from that which ... is ordained by nature.... [The law] exacts a revenue for the government,—it compels the payment of rent,—it enforces the giving of tithes, but it does not ensure to labour its produce and its reward.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, the great object of law and of government has been and is, to establish and protect a violation of that natural right of property they are described in theory as being intended to guarantee.<sup>23</sup>

His description of the state anticipated Marx’s “executive committee of the ruling class.” The landed aristocracy, he said, was one of “the legislative classes embodied into, and constituting the government”;<sup>24</sup> indeed, “the landed aristocracy and the government are one—the latter being nothing more than the organized means of preserving the power and privileges of the former.” He continues:

There is sometimes a conflict between [the capitalist] and the land-owner, sometimes one obtains a triumph, and sometimes the other; both however willingly support the government and the church; and both side against the labourer to oppress him; one lending his aid to enforce combination laws, while the other upholds game laws, and both enforce the exaction of tithes and of the revenue.<sup>25</sup>

Hodgskin’s language (including his reference to “continual possession and use” above) suggested an occupancy-and-use theory of land ownership. Cultivation as the basis of true ownership was implied by the tendency of land to revert

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20 Ibid., 33–34.

21 Ibid., 237.

22 Thomas Hodgskin, “Letter the Third: The Legal Right of Property,” in *The Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted*, 55.

23 Ibid., 48.

24 Ibid., 51.

25 Ibid., 53.



to weeds if not used. "The mere landowner"—who does not labor—is fed "by violating the natural right of property."<sup>26</sup>

The case of the capitalist was somewhat more difficult, considering the extent to which capitalists (especially small ones) mixed rentier income with the proceeds of actual labor. But the capitalist as such "has no natural right to the large share of the annual produce the law secures to him."<sup>27</sup> Hodgskin, in both *Labour Defended* and *Popular Political Economy*, attacked the notions that present capital investment comes from past abstention, and that it is necessary to advance a "labor fund" from past savings:

As far as food, drink and clothing are concerned, it is quite plain, then, that no species of labourer depends on any previously prepared stock, for in fact no such stock exists; but every species of labourer does constantly, and at all times, depend for his supplies on the co-existing labour of some other labourers.<sup>28</sup>

When a capitalist therefore, who owns a brew-house and all the instruments and materials requisite for making porter, pays the actual brewers with the coin he has received for his beer, and they buy bread, while the journeymen bakers buy porter with their money wages, which is afterwards paid to the owner of the brew-house, is it not plain that the real wages of both these parties consist of the produce of the other; or that the bread made by the journeyman baker pays for the porter made by the journeyman brewer? But the same is the case with all other commodities, and labour, not capital, pays all wages.<sup>29</sup>

In fact it is a miserable delusion to call capital something saved.<sup>30</sup>

What political economy conventionally referred to as the "labor fund," and attributed to past abstention and accumulation, in fact resulted from the *present* division of labor and the cooperative distribution of its product. "Capital" is a term for a right of property in organizing and disposing of this present labor. The same basic cooperative functions could be carried out just as easily by the workers themselves, through mutual credit. Under the present system,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Hodgskin, *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital* (1825; reprint, London: The Labour Publishing Co., 1922), 44.

<sup>29</sup> Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, 247.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 255.

the capitalist monopolizes these cooperative functions, and thus appropriates the productivity gains from the social division of labor:"

Betwixt him who produces food and him who produces clothing, betwixt him who makes instruments and him who uses them, in steps the capitalist, who neither makes nor uses them, and appropriates to himself the produce of both. With as niggard a hand as possible he transfers to each a part of the produce of the other, keeping to himself the large share.... While he despoils both, so completely does he exclude one from the view of the other that both believe they are indebted him for subsistence.<sup>31</sup>

Hodgskin ridiculed more generally the common defenses of the necessary or useful role of the capitalist in mainstream political economy. He celebrated the very possibility that apologists warned of—i.e., that “by combining [workers would] ... incapacitate the masters from attaining any profit on their capital.... They may reduce or destroy altogether the profit of the idle capitalist ... but they will augment the wages and rewards of industry, and will give to genius and skill their due share of the national produce.”<sup>32</sup>

In response to the ostensible concern of members of Parliament that combinations of journeymen would drive capital out of the country, so that journeymen would suffer a lack of work, Hodgskin had only scorn: “The journeymen ... know their own interest better than it is known to the legislator; and they would be all the richer if there were not an idle capitalist in the country.”<sup>33</sup> The absentee ownership of capital, Hodgskin argued, skews investment in a different direction from what it would be in an economy of labor-owned capital, and reduces investment to lower levels:

It is maintained ... that labour is not productive, and, in fact, the labourer is not allowed to work, unless, in addition to replacing whatever he uses or consumes, and comfortably subsisting himself, his labour also gives a profit to the capitalist...; or unless his labour produces a great deal more ... than will suffice for his own comfortable subsistence. Capitalists becoming the proprietors of all the wealth of the society ... act on this principle, and never ... will they suffer labourers to have the means of

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<sup>31</sup> Hodgskin, *Labour Defended*, 71.

<sup>32</sup> Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, 91–92.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 92–95.

subsistence, unless they have a confident expectation that their labour will produce a profit over and above their own subsistence.<sup>34</sup>

When capital equipment is owned by a class of rentiers separate from those who make it or use it, the owners may be said more accurately to impede production rather than “contribute” to it.... If there were only the makers and users of capital to share between them the produce of their co-operating labour, the only limit to productive labour would be, that it should obtain for them and their families a comfortable subsistence. But when in addition to this ..., they must also produce as much more as satisfies the capitalist, this limit is much sooner reached. When the capitalist ... will allow labourers neither to make nor use instruments, unless *he* obtains a profit over and above the subsistence of the labourer, it is plain that bounds are set to productive labour much within what Nature prescribes.<sup>35</sup>

He developed the same theme in regard to land in *The Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted*: “the labour which would be amply rewarded in cultivating all our waste lands, till every foot of the country became like the garden grounds about London, were all the produce of labour on those lands to be the reward of the labourer, cannot obtain from them a sufficiency to pay profit, tithes, rent, and taxes.”<sup>36</sup>

Almost a hundred years before J.A. Hobson or John Maynard Keynes, Hodgskin remarked on the effect of privilege, which separates effort from reward, in the maldistribution of purchasing power: “The peasant, who produces so much corn, that his master is ruined by its reduced price, has not wherewithal to eat and cover himself.”<sup>37</sup> And this in turn results in crises of overaccumulation and underconsumption:

The wants of individuals which labour is intended to gratify, are the natural guide to their exertions. The instant they are compelled to labour for others, this guide forsakes them, and their exertions are dictated by the greed and avarice, and false hopes of their masters.... By this system the hand is dissevered from the mouth ... When we look at the

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34 Ibid., 51–52.

35 Ibid., 243–244.

36 Hodgskin, “Letter the Eighth: Evils of the Artificial Right of Property,” in *The Natural and Artificial Right of Property Contrasted*, 149.

37 Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy*, 264.

commercial history of our country, and see the false hopes of our merchants and manufacturers leading to periodical commercial convulsions, we are compelled to conclude, that they have not the same source as the regular and harmonious external world.<sup>38</sup>

As editor of *The Economist*, Hodgskin exercised a significant influence on Herbert Spencer while the latter was on the staff there. Although Spencer is conventionally—and wrongly—remembered as a social Darwinist, he was actually quite radical. For example, early editions of *Social Statics* included radical quasi-Georgist proposals for land reform. He also viewed the wage relationship as an unhealthy holdover from earlier master-servant and master-slave relations, and predicted that worker cooperatives would gradually be predominant (as well as being more efficient because of the agency problems of capitalist ownership/management they solved).

### Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865)

As we shall see below, the early American individualist movement (particularly its founder, Josiah Warren) was an offshoot of Owenite cooperativism. But in addition, American individualism was influenced heavily by the mutualist theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Reciprocity (or mutuality, or commutative justice) was central to Proudhon's economic thought. In a passage in the second volume of *System of Economical Contradictions*, Proudhon writes:

The theory of *mutuality* ..., that is to say exchange in kind, ... is the synthesis of the notions of private property and collective ownership. This synthesis is as old as its constituent parts since it merely means that society is returning ... to its primitive practices as a result of a six-thousand-year-long meditation on the fundamental proposition that  $A = A$ .<sup>39</sup>

The mutualist principle of “service for service, product for product, loan for loan, insurance for insurance, credit for credit, security for security, guarantee for guarantee” is an application of the legal principle of reciprocity to “the tasks of labor and to the good offices of free fraternity ... On it depend

38 Hodgskin, “Letter the Eighth,” 155.

39 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Selected Writings of P.J. Proudhon*, ed. S. Edwards (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1969), 57–59. Edwards mistakenly attributes the quote to the first volume; it is, in fact, from the second.

all the mutualist institutions: mutual insurance, mutual credit, mutual aid, mutual education..., etc.”<sup>40</sup> The perfect expression of mutuality for Proudhon was the contract between equals, both “synallagmatic” (bilateral) and “commutative” (based on an exchange of equal values).<sup>41</sup> Unequal exchange, on the other hand, was the defining characteristic of exploitation:

If ... the tailor, for rendering the value of a day's work, consumes ten times the product of the day's work of the weaver, it is as if the weaver gave ten days of his life for one day of the tailor's. This is exactly what happens when a peasant pays twelve francs to a lawyer for a document which it takes him an hour to prepare.... Every error in commutative justice is an immolation of the laborer, a transfusion of the blood of one man into the body of another.<sup>42</sup>

Reciprocity is built into the normal functioning of a free market. When exchange is free and uncoerced, it is impossible for one party to benefit at the other's expense.

The ratio at which goods and services are exchanged will move toward a value that reflects the respective costs of the parties, including the disutility of their labor.<sup>43</sup> So the normal pattern of free exchange is cost for cost, effort for effort, disutility for disutility, so that things equal out through the “higgling of the market.” Or as Proudhon described it:

Whoever says commerce says exchange of equal values, for if the values are not equal and the injured party perceives it, he will not consent to the exchange, and there will be no commerce.<sup>44</sup>

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40 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, “Political Capacity of the Working Class,” in *Selected Writings*, 59–60.

41 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *The Principle of Federation*, trans. R. Vernon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 36.

42 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *System of Economical Contradictions, or, The Philosophy of Misery*, vol. 1, trans. B. Tucker (Boston: Benjamin R. Tucker, 1888), 123.

43 It was on this basis that James Buchanan explained Smith's exchange of beaver for deer at embedded labor ratios as the result of our nature as rational utility maximizers. If they exchanged at anything other than a ratio based on respective effort, it would affect the make-vs.-buy calculus of one of the parties and thereby shift the quantities produced until the ratio returned to normal. See J. Buchanan, *Cost and Choice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), chapter 1.

44 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property?* ed. and trans. D. Kelley and B. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 103.

What characterizes the contract is the agreement for equal exchange; and it is by virtue of this agreement that liberty and well-being increase; while by the establishment of authority, both of these necessarily diminish.... Between contracting parties there is necessarily for each one a real personal interest.... Between governing and governed, on the contrary, no matter how the system of representation or of delegation of the governmental function is arranged, there is *necessarily* alienation of a part of the liberty and of the means of the citizen.<sup>45</sup>

For no one has a right to impose his own merchandise upon another: the sole judge of utility, or in other words the want, is the buyer.... Take away reciprocal liberty, and exchange is no longer the expression of industrial solidarity: it is robbery.<sup>46</sup>

Proudhon was heavily influenced by Comte's schema, in which "industrial" society based on contract succeeded the previous "militant" (feudal) stage of history. His ultimate vision for society was "the notion of Contract succeeding that of Government".<sup>47</sup> The state would wither away, and the political be absorbed into the economic:

It is industrial organization that we will put in place of government.... In place of laws, we will put contracts.—No more laws voted by a majority, or even unanimously; each citizen, each town, each industrial union, makes its own laws. In place of political powers, we will put economic forces.<sup>48</sup>

Hodgskin's theory of natural and artificial property, and Proudhon's similar theory, were to be paradigmatic for American individualist anarchist economics. The common theme running through market anarchist theories of property is that natural property rights *reflect* scarcity, while artificial property rights *create* it; natural property secures the individual's right to her *own* labor-product, while artificial property entitles the holder to collect tribute on the labor-product of *others*; natural property entitles the holder to a return for

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45 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. J. Beverley Robinson (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Inc., 1923), 113–114.

46 Proudhon, *System of Economical Contradictions*, I, 80–81.

47 Proudhon, *The General Idea of the Revolution*, 126.

48 *Ibid.*, 125–126.

her *contributions* to production, while artificial property entitles the holder to collect a toll for *not impeding* production.

Thus, in response to the proprietor's claim not only to have labored but to have provided employment to those otherwise without means of support, Proudhon challenged:

You have laboured! Have you never made others labour? Why, then, have they lost in labouring for you what you have gained in not labouring for them?<sup>49</sup>

Like the children of Israel in Canaan, the proprietor reaps where she did not sow.<sup>50</sup>

Proudhon also argued, in language that echoed Hodgskin, that capitalists enclosed the increased productivity of cooperative labor as a source of rent by preempting the channels by which workers otherwise might exchange credit on their own non-exploitative terms. As a result the increase in productivity from collective labor is appropriated entirely by the owning classes:

The capitalist has paid as many times "one day's wage" as he has employed labourers each day.... For he has paid nothing for that immense power which results from the union and harmony of laborers and the convergence and simultaneity of their efforts.<sup>51</sup>

A force of a thousand men working for twenty days has been paid the same as a force of one working fifty-five years; but this force of one thousand has done in twenty days what a single man, working continuously for a million centuries, could not accomplish: is this exchange equitable? Once more, no; for when you have paid all the individual forces, you have still not paid the collective force.<sup>52</sup>

This is made possible by a monopoly on the supply of credit, which prevents associated labor from appropriating the productivity gains from association in the form of increased wages. By maintaining a monopoly on the function of advancing the capital necessary to organize collective production, and supplying the labor fund, capitalists are able to appropriate the net product to

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49 Proudhon, *What is Property?* 69.

50 Ibid., 119.

51 Ibid., 91.

52 Ibid., 93.

themselves as profit.<sup>53</sup> The purpose of Proudhon's mutual credit proposals was to enable workers, rather than absentee owners, to profit from cooperation: "the collective force, which is a product of the community, ceases to be a source of profit to a small number of managers and speculators: it becomes the property of all the workers."<sup>54</sup>

Proudhon's views on privilege and artificial property were in direct conflict with the more orthodox apologetics of French liberal Frederic Bastiat, as institutional economist John Commons argues:

According to Carey and Bastiat, and contrary to Ricardo and the communists and anarchists, the landlord or capitalist rendered a service to the community as much as did the laborer. The value of this service was the alternative price which the employer or laborer would be compelled to pay if he did not pay rent to the landlord, or profit and interest to the capitalist. He was better off by paying rent for superior land than he would be by going to the margin of cultivation where no rent was paid, and better off by paying profits and interest to capitalists than by working for marginal capitalists who made no profits.<sup>55</sup>

But Bastiat and Carey did not distinguish "productivity" and "service" from rents on artificial scarcity.<sup>56</sup> For Bastiat, the landlord and capitalist contributed a "service" equivalent to the alternative cost if his land or capital were not available; if rent on land and profit on capital are less than the utility the laborer receives from access to them compared to what her utility would be without, that is actually an unearned rent accruing to *labor*. And likewise inventions:

All this social accrual of value was freely available to present laborers who did not own it, and thereby "saved" them from the labor they would otherwise be compelled to perform, as individuals repeating the past history of society, in order to obtain the present necessities and luxuries.<sup>57</sup>

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53 Proudhon, *System of Economical Contradictions*, I, 303.

54 Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution*, 221, 223.

55 J.R. Commons, *Institutional Economics*, vol. 1 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 114.

56 In the marginal productivity theory established by Clark, of course, there is no difference. Whatever the price the supplier of an "input" is able to charge—including that of not obstructing production—adds to the price of a finished product, is its "productivity."

57 Commons, *Institutional Economics*, 325.



But for some reason the landlords and capitalists are allowed to stand in for “society” in taking credit for the improved land and technology that make increased productivity possible.<sup>58</sup> Thanks to privilege, they can collect tribute for the productivity gains created by society. Proudhon illustrated the principle with regard to the landlord’s alleged “service” or “contribution” to production, in merely not impeding access to land she was not working herself:

The blacksmith who makes farming equipment for the farmer, the wheelwright who makes him a cart, the mason who builds his barn..., etc., all of whom contribute to agricultural production by the tools they provide, are producers of utility; and to this extent they have a right to a part of the products.... “Without any doubt,” Say says, “but the land is also an instrument whose service must be paid for, and so.” I agree that the land is an instrument, but who made it? The proprietor? ... The monopoly of the proprietor lies just in the fact that, though he did not make the implement, he requires payment for its use.<sup>59</sup>

Land is productive; but its productive forces are freely given by nature. They can contribute to exchange value only when the free gift of nature is monopolized. The landlord’s only “contribution” to value is that she sits atop the free gift without using it herself, and charges tribute for access to it. Or as Marx put it in volume 3 of *Capital*, “Land becomes personified in the landlord and ... gets on its hind legs to demand, as an independent force, its share of the product created with its help.”<sup>60</sup>

### Josiah Warren (1798–1874)<sup>61</sup>

In America Josiah Warren, the founder of individualist anarchism, stands alongside Proudhon and Owen in importance. Warren was initially a follower of Owen, and strongly influenced by his experiences in the Owenite colony, New Harmony Community of Equality (whose constitution he was involved

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 319–320.

<sup>59</sup> Proudhon, *What is Property?* 124–126.

<sup>60</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Capital*, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1998), 37: 811.

<sup>61</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this section are from J. Martin, *Men Against the State* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Ralph Miles Publisher, Inc., 1970).

in drafting).<sup>62</sup> He soon deviated considerably from Owenism, based on the lessons he learned from the failure of New Harmony. Warren blamed the result on the emphasis the community at the expense of the individual—an attitude extending not only to disregard for individual rights of possession and reward for individual effort, but even to personal differences of opinion.<sup>63</sup>

Warren viewed the central folly of New Harmony as the combination of interests, which could not succeed without an authoritarian government to enforce artificial harmony. Instead, he proposed “a system based on voluntary cooperation, but at no place rising above any individual within its structure.”<sup>64</sup> In Warren’s own words, society

must avoid all combinations and connections of persons and interests, and all other arrangements which will not leave every individual at all times at liberty to dispose of his or her person, and time, and property in any manner in which his or her feelings or judgment may dictate. WITHOUT INVOLVING THE PERSONS OR INTERESTS OF OTHERS.<sup>65</sup>

The only way to avoid conflicts of interest was “that there be NO COMBINED INTERESTS TO MANAGE. All interests must be individualized—all responsibilities must be *individual*.”<sup>66</sup> Like Hodgskin and Proudhon, Warren regarded the only legitimate property in land as possessory: “The greatest crime which can be committed against society and which causes poverty and lays the foundation of almost all other crimes is the monopoly of the soil.”<sup>67</sup>

Warren shared with Owen and Proudhon the belief that the lack of an equitable medium of exchange was central to the problem of poverty among the producing classes. If the producer could immediately convert the labor embodied in her product into a medium of exchange, without depending on vested interests to provide currency and credit at a monopoly price, her standard of living would be limited only by her willingness to work. He favored a system based on “the cost principle,” i.e., based on labor time, rather than a “value” based on supply and demand:

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62 Martin, *Men Against the State*, 7.

63 Ibid., 9–10.

64 Ibid., 13–14.

65 Ibid., 14.

66 Ibid., 60–61.

67 Ibid., 34.

if [one] could always get [goods] for that amount of his own labor which they cost an expert workman, he could have no motive to do without them.... Now, if it were not a part of the present system to get a price according to the degree of want or suffering of the community, there would long since have been some arrangement made to ADAPT THE SUPPLY TO THE DEMAND.... In society where even the first element of value order had made its way to the intellects of men, there would be some point at which all would continually make known their wants, ... and put them in a position to be supplied—and all who wanted employment would know where to look for it, and the *supply would be adapted to the demand*.... Another great obstacle to division and exchange is the lack of some *principle* by which to settle the prices, or which would itself settle them harmoniously, instead of the disgusting process of *bargaining* in every little transaction ... Gratuitous labor must necessarily be limited, and thousands of exchanges of great *value*, but little *cost*, would immensely increase the comforts of all parties, where *COST*, as a *principle*, measured and settled the price in every transaction.... Another great obstacle to extensive division of labor, and rapid and easy exchanges, seems to be the want of the means of *effecting* exchanges.... Where every one has plenty of a circulating medium always at hand, exchanges and division of labor would not be limited for want of money.<sup>68</sup>

He continued to endorse enthusiastically, as a result, the Owenite idea of cooperation—"the proposal to exchange all labor employed in the production of goods and services equally, hour for hour, substituting for the state or privately controlled currency based on metallic commodities a circulating medium consisting of 'labor notes.'" <sup>69</sup> Warren saw labor currency as leading to the eventual extinction of banks and bankers: "All money and bank notes as now known and used, act as drafts or demands upon labor and they are all issued by those who do not labor."<sup>70</sup> Besides his attacks on privilege as manifested in landlordism and money monopoly, Warren also opposed patents.<sup>71</sup>

In Warren's views on money, land, and patents, we have the germs of the theory of privilege and exploitation that was later systematically developed by Tucker. Eunice Minette Schuster, in *Native American Anarchism*, repeatedly referred to Warren and the other Individualists as "non-class conscious," but that is really inaccurate. They just weren't class conscious in Marxian terms.

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68 Ibid., 63–68.

69 Ibid., 11.

70 Ibid., 41.

71 Ibid., 75.

Warren described society as approaching a revolutionary crisis in the conflict between labor and its exploiters:

Society has been in a state of violence, of revolution and suffering, ever since its first formation; and at this moment, the greatest number are about to array themselves against the smaller, who have, by some subtle and hidden means lived luxuriously upon their labor without rendering an equivalent.... The grinding power of capital is everywhere felt to be irresistible by ordinary means.<sup>72</sup>

The real difference between Warren and Marx, as James Martin pointed out, was that instead of framing class conflict in terms of capitalist versus industrial proletarian, Warren saw it in more traditional American populist terms of producer versus parasite.<sup>73</sup>

#### Ezra Heywood (1829–1893)<sup>74</sup>

After Warren, individualism branched out and developed in several mutually reinforcing strands. Ezra Heywood, who first met Warren in Boston in 1863, went considerably beyond Warren in his social radicalism. He developed an affinity for the labor movement upon coming into contact with the Worcester Labor Reform League, formed in August 1867. The League “unofficially affiliated for a time” with Sylvie’s National Labor Union, whose congress he attended in September 1868.<sup>75</sup>

In an 1868 address later published as *The Labor Party*, Heywood tied class rule to the exploitation of labor, in language that suggested he had not yet finally renounced the idea of political action:

No one will deny that labor is entitled to its earnings, and that it is the duty, both of individuals and society, ... to render unto all men and women according to their works. Let us also bear in mind that class rule, the centralizing of political or financial power in the hands of few, to the injury of many, is wrong, and that law.... should cover with the shield of its protection the whole people, especially defenseless workers. It is the

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72 Ibid., 49.

73 Ibid., 48.

74 Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this section are from Martin, *Men Against the State*, op. cit.

75 Ibid., 106.

violation of these simple, self-evident truths which provokes the widespread, profound and ominous agitation called the labor movement.<sup>76</sup>

Because of his ambivalence on political action and his loyalty to the NLU, Heywood proposed what Martin called “a patchwork of anarchist economics and piecemeal expedients favored by union councils.”<sup>77</sup> He placed a great deal of emphasis, however, on the issues of “free banking and a labor currency,”<sup>78</sup> which he and his Worcester comrades had focused on independently. By 1869 Heywood’s ambivalence on the political issue had turned into total rejection. He and a number of his associates, meeting in Boston, organized the New England Labor Reform League. Formed in response to the failure of the NLU, the League gravitated to an increasingly strict anarchism, “resulting in its moving to the extreme left and remaining there for its 25 years of existence.”<sup>79</sup>

At this point Heywood came into contact with the money reformer William Greene. Greene associated himself with the NELRL and helped push it toward anarchism. The two issued a *Declaration of Sentiments* of the league, which called, as its principal aim, for the “abolition of class laws and false customs, whereby legitimate enterprise is defrauded by speculative monopoly, and the reconstruction of government on the basis of justice and reciprocity.”<sup>80</sup> The means was to be abolition of all privileges depending on state intervention: “Free contracts, free money, free markets, free transit, and free land.”<sup>81</sup> Poverty resulted from “the claim to own and sell what one has not earned” through rent, profit, and interest.<sup>82</sup>

In his pamphlet *Yours Or Mine* (1869), he echoed Warren’s argument for property ownership based on occupancy and use.<sup>83</sup> He argued in the same work against exclusive currencies and legal tender laws as another cause of inequality in wealth. Legal tender was a “class currency” because it didn’t represent all wealth in the nation, but only the property of those who issued it.<sup>84</sup> Interest he defined as “the monopoly price of money,” and claimed that “all payment beyond labor and risk was no better than extortion.”<sup>85</sup> In *Hard Cash*

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76 Ibid., 107.

77 Ibid., 108.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., 109.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., 109–110.

83 Ibid., 110–111.

84 Ibid., 112.

85 Ibid. 112–113.

(1874) he developed more fully the exploitative results of mandatory specie backing, and called for a financial system based on Greene's mutual banks (see below).<sup>86</sup>

In 1871 the New England Labor Reform League gave birth to a national organization, the American LRL. Heywood served as corresponding secretary, and the individualists J.K. Ingalls and Stephen Pearl Andrews (best known as an expositor of Warren) were affiliated. The ALRL attracted a wide spectrum of reformers, including Warrenites, Owenites, and Fourierists.<sup>87</sup> In 1872, Heywood began editing the four-page *The Word: A Monthly Journal of Reform*, which served as the leading journal of individualist thought until Tucker's *Liberty*. It was intended as an organ of public discussion for the members of both labor reform leagues, and published work by most major figures in individualist anarchism and the land and money reform movements. Its position:

THE WORD favors the abolition of speculative income, of women's slavery, and war government; regards all claims to property not founded on a labor title as morally void, and asserts the free use of land to be the inalienable privilege of every human being—on having the right to own or sell only his service impressed upon it. Not by restrictive methods, but through freedom and reciprocity, THE WORD seeks the extinction of interest, rent, dividends, and profit, except as they represent work done; the abolition of railway, telegraphic, banking, trades-union and other corporations charging more than actual cost for values furnished, and the repudiation of all so-called debts the principal whereof has been paid in the form of interest.<sup>88</sup>

Heywood considered employers in the main to be the guilty parties when strikes resulted in violence, and to emphasize the role of state violence in aiding the side of the companies. He admitted that he did not support combinations of labor in principle, and preferred to let the power of capital be ended by the abolition of privilege. Nevertheless, he considered the Mollie Maguires to be "morally lawful belligerents" engaged in "defensive warfare" and in his 1877 pamphlet *The Great Strike* endorsed the railroad strikes.<sup>89</sup>

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86 Ibid. 113.

87 Ibid., 115–116.

88 Ibid., 116.

89 Ibid., 120–121.

**William Batchelder Greene (1819–1878) and  
Joshua King Ingalls (1816–1898)**

Besides Heywood, the two most important figures between Warren and Benjamin Tucker were William Greene (who worked out a theory of the money monopoly and mutual banking) and Joshua King Ingalls (who supported occupancy-and-use as the only legitimate basis for land ownership). In a series of editions of *Mutual Banking*, Greene proposed the creation of mutual banks which would issue loans to members at nominal interest (just enough to cover administrative costs, one percent or less) in the form of mutual banknotes against whatever collateral they might pledge. In return, they would accept the notes of other members in payment for their own goods and services. He expected such free competition in the issue of secured loans to exercise a powerful downward pressure on the interest rates charged even by capitalist banks, and increase the independence of labor:

[E]ach new member joining the Bank increases the number of people who can do business with each other on this new basis. The circle of exchange becomes wider and wider and it cannot be long before the whole communities is impelled by self interest to do business on this plan ... Once the Mutual Bank is operating, money will be available practically without interest to any responsible producer, so that his independence will no longer depend upon the whim of the usurer, but upon his determination and his ability in his line of work. There will be big factories and small shops, and the demand for wage labor will be greater than the supply, with the result that wages will soar until they approach the full value of the work done.<sup>90</sup>

In the period from 1872 to 1876, Ezra Heywood and the New England Labor Reform League repeatedly lobbied the General Court to charter a mutual bank, with no success. The experience confirmed the general sentiment of the League that “legislatures are made up of capitalists who draw pay for serving their own interests, not the people’s.”<sup>91</sup>

It was Greene’s monumental contribution to abandon the old Owenite/ Warrenite model of “labor for labor” exchange, and to replace it with a market system of pricing in which price would naturally tend toward labor-value

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90 William Batchelder Greene, *Mutual Banking* (1870; reprint, New York: Gordon Press, 1974), [http://www.the-portal.org/mutual\\_banking.htm](http://www.the-portal.org/mutual_banking.htm).

91 Martin, *Men Against the State*, 137.

following the abolition of artificial returns on land and capital.<sup>92</sup> Greene also stated one of the best summaries of the nature of privilege: “It is right that all persons should be equal before the law; but when we have established equality before the law, our work is but half done.... Of what avail is it that we are all equal before the law, if the law is itself unequal.”<sup>93</sup>

J.K. Ingalls—a New Englander, like most of the leading individualists—was involved in many reform currents. He embraced the labor theory of value early on, along with individualist views on the exploitative nature of interest. In 1845 he came into contact with leaders of the Land Reform Society and from that point on focused mainly on issues of land monopoly. In the same general period he became acquainted with anarchist ideas, having been introduced to Proudhon through the articles of Charles A. Dana, and met Warren and Andrews. Ingalls had a role in forming the New England Labor Reform League with other New England anarchists, and was famous for the phrase, “The whole produce of labor belongs to the laborer, and is his natural reward.”<sup>94</sup> Ingalls stressed land monopoly as the main source of inequity, and treated the power of capital as such as secondary. He elaborated this view in his pamphlet *Land and Labor* (published in 1872 by Heywood), in articles for *The Word*, and in two 1878 pamphlets, *Work and Wealth* and *Periodical Business Crises*. Land, as a thing in limited quantity and not produced by human labor, was not a commodity and therefore not an appropriate object of ownership. So long as land was monopolized, “schemes of currency and finance” could avail little in reducing exploitation. On the other hand, “repeal our unreasonable land laws, half feudal and half civil, so that organized injustice can no longer have the land for its fulcrum, and you will find the lever money, now so weighty for wrong, to be the most serviceable and inoffensive of servants.”<sup>95</sup> Ingalls’ remedy was land tenure by occupancy and use alone.<sup>96</sup>

Ingalls was alarmed by the Gilded Age government largesse toward corporate robber barons (e.g., the railroad land grants and the giveaway of public land to speculators under cover of the Homestead Act). He favored, not new legislation, but the repeal of existing laws that protected land monopoly.<sup>97</sup> In addition, Ingalls was especially brilliant in drawing attention to the origin of

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92 Ibid., 138.

93 William Batchelder Greene, *Equality* (West Brookfield, Mass.: O.S. Cooke & Co., 1849), <http://libertarian-labyrinth.org/mutual/wbg-equality.html>.

94 Martin, *Men Against the State*, 139–142, 145.

95 Quoted in *ibid.*, 145.

96 Ibid., 144–45, 149.

97 Ibid. 145–46, 151.



land titles and the historical roots of existing patterns of ownership—a subject which mainstream political economists preferred to leave decently behind a veil—arguing that “to trace any title back will yield us nothing.... but forceful and fraudulent taking, even were land a proper subject for taking at all.”<sup>98</sup>

Henry George deserves some mention, while we’re discussing Ingalls. Although he doesn’t fall explicitly within the purview of this article, as he was not properly speaking an anarchist, his views on land monopoly definitely fall within the broad class of radical political economy. Despite similar basic sentiments toward the land monopoly, Tucker devoted considerable space in the pages of *Liberty* to combating George’s Single Tax as a statist abomination, and proposing his own occupancy-and-use standard of ownership as the proper response to this evil. Some later market anarchists, like Franz Oppenheimer, Albert Nock, and Ralph Borsodi, can fairly be described as Georgists. (I will say more about some of these figures below.)

### Benjamin Ricketson Tucker (1854–1939)

Benjamin Tucker integrated and systematized all the earlier strands of American individualism and mutualism and formed them into a single coherent doctrine. In addition, he was probably the most able polemicist the individualist anarchist movement in America has ever known, combining clear and economical prose with Jesuitical logic. Like the other individualists, Tucker was born in New England and was involved in most of the major reform movements of his day. In 1872 he met Warren and Greene at a meeting of the New England Labor Reform League. Later the same year he first corresponded with Heywood, and started submitting articles to *The Word*. During this period he began synthesizing the ideas of Proudhon with those of Warren, Spooner, and the other individualists. His discovery of Greene’s *Mutual Banking*, from which he adopted his theory of money and banking whole cloth, was an epiphany.<sup>99</sup>

But it was as an independent editor and publisher that Tucker made his real contributions to the anarchist movement. In 1881 he began publishing *Liberty*, the vehicle through which he expressed his mature thought.<sup>100</sup> Tucker worked almost entirely in the periodical press. His thought was presented in book form in two major compilations from *Liberty*: the first, *Instead of a Book, By a Man Too Busy to Write One*, edited by Tucker himself, and the second briefer one,

98 Quoted in Martin, *Men Against the State*, 148–149.

99 Ibid., 204–206.

100 Ibid., 206–207.

*Individual Liberty*, edited by Clarence L. Swartz, a Tucker disciple, while he was still living.

Tucker saw his own anarchistic socialism (to which he credited Proudhon and Warren as the original creators) and the socialism of Marx as sharing the belief, derived from a radical reading of Ricardo and the other political economists, that labor did not receive its full product as a wage. The difference, he said, was that Warren and Proudhon saw the class monopolies that facilitated exploitation “rested upon Authority.” The state, manipulated by capital, allowed unlimited competition in the supply of labor, but limited it in the supply of land and capital. For that reason the owners of the means of production, unlike labor, were able to collect monopoly rents in the form of “interest, rent, and profit” while wages were kept down to “the starvation point”:

So they raised the banner of Absolute Free Trade; free trade at home, as well as with foreign countries; the logical carrying out of the Manchester doctrine; *laissez faire* the universal rule. Under this banner they began their fight upon monopolies, whether the all-inclusive monopoly of the State Socialists, or the various class monopolies that now prevail.... Of the latter they distinguished four of principal importance: the money monopoly, the land monopoly, the tariff monopoly, and the patent monopoly.<sup>101</sup>

Tucker saw coercion as the fundamental support of privilege, doing violence to the natural harmony of interests. Because of privilege, under capitalism “society is fundamentally anti-social.” Wealth becomes “a hook with which to filch from labor’s pockets. Every man who gets rich thereby makes his neighbors poor. The better off one is, the worse the rest are.... The laborer’s Deficit is precisely equal to the Capitalist’s Efficit.”<sup>102</sup> Under the free market of anarchistic socialism, in contrast,

every man ... adding to his riches makes every other man richer; that increase and concentration of wealth through labor tend to increase, cheapen, and vary production; that every increase of capital in the hands of the laborer tends, in the absence of legal monopoly, to put more products, better products, cheaper products, and a greater variety of products

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101 Benjamin Tucker, “State Socialism and Anarchism: How Far They Agree, and Wherein They Differ,” in *Instead of a Book: By a Man Too Busy to Write One* (1897; reprint, New York: Gordon Press, 1973), 9–11.

102 Tucker, “Socialism: What It Is,” in *Instead of a Book*, 362.

within the reach of every man who works; and that this fact means the physical, mental, and moral perfecting of mankind, and the realization of human fraternity.<sup>103</sup>

Besides their dispute over the Single Tax, Tucker came into conflict with Henry George—in terms much like the Proudhon-Bastiat debate—over the latter's defense of interest as a payment for the “productive services” rendered by capital.<sup>104</sup> Profit, Tucker paraphrased George as saying, is “the capitalist's share of the results of the increased power which Capital gives the laborer.”<sup>105</sup> But as Tucker pointed out, this is economic nonsense: “Where there is free competition in the manufacture and sale of spades, the price of a spade will be governed by the cost of its production, and not by the value of the extra potatoes which the spade will enable its purchaser to dig.”<sup>106</sup>

Only when someone has a monopoly on the supply of spades can he charge according to utility to the user rather than cost of production. In that case, he can pocket most of the proceeds of increased productivity and leave the purchaser just enough of the net increase in potatoes to persuade him to buy the spade. And the monopolist's price is clearly a deduction from the wages of labor:

What are the normal earnings of other men? Evidently what they can produce with all the tools and advantages which they can procure *in a free market* without force or fraud. If, then, the capitalist, by abolishing the free market, compels other men to procure their tools and advantages of him on less favorable terms than they could get before, while it may be better for them to come to his terms than to go without the capital, does he not deduct from their earnings?<sup>107</sup>

It was ironic that George should have failed to grasp this principle in the case of capital, because it was the basis for his criticism of land monopoly—the injustice of monopolizing natural opportunities in order to collect tribute from the labor of others:

He does not see that capital in the hands of labor is but the utilization of a natural force or opportunity, just as land is in the hands of labor, and

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103 Ibid.

104 Tucker, “Economic Hodge-Podge,” in *Instead of a Book*, 202–205.

105 Ibid., 202.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

that it is as proper in the one case as in the other that the benefits of such utilization of natural forces should be enjoyed by the whole body of consumers.<sup>108</sup>

The truth in both cases is just this,—that nature furnishes man immense forces with which to work in the shape of land and capital, ... and that any man or class getting a monopoly of either or both will put all other men in subjection and live in luxury on the products of their labor.<sup>109</sup>

Regarding Bastiat's example of the plane, Tucker pointed out that price in a free market is governed by cost of production rather than utility to the purchaser, and "that James consequently, though his plane should enable William to make a million planks, could not sell or lend it for more than it cost him to make it, except he enjoyed a monopoly of the plane-making industry."<sup>110</sup>

Under Greene's influence, Tucker saw the Money Monopoly as the most important of the Four Monopolies. This is how he envisioned the worker-friendly market, in the absence of that monopoly:

the thousands of people who are now deterred from going into business by the ruinously high rates which they must pay for capital with which to start and carry on business will find their difficulties removed.... Then will be seen an exemplification of the words of Richard Cobden that, when two laborers are after one employer, wages fall, but when two employers are after one laborer, wages rise. Labor will then be in a position to dictate its wages, and will thus secure its natural wage, its entire product.<sup>111</sup>

As a result Tucker saw no need for state intervention to secure the interests of workers against employers, as evidenced by his position on the "yellow dog" contract:

These employers have a perfect right to hire men on whatever conditions the men will accept. If the latter accept cruel conditions, it is only because they are obliged to do so. What thus obliges them? Law-sustained monopolies. Their relief lies, then, not in depriving employers of the right

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108 Ibid., 204.

109 Ibid., 205.

110 Tucker, "The Position of William," in *Instead of a Book*, 200.

111 Tucker, "State Socialism and Anarchism," in *Instead of a Book*, 11.

of contract, but in giving employees the same right of contract without crippling them in advance.<sup>112</sup>

Although the United States was well into the corporate revolution, and “internal improvements” and railroad subsidies were a large part of national economic life, at the time Tucker wrote, he dealt with these matters almost not at all. The four privileges he attacked—the money and land monopolies, tariffs, and patents—had been an integral part of capitalism from its beginnings. The last-named privileges, tariffs and patents, indeed played a large part in the cartelizing and concentration of the corporate economy during the latter part of the nineteenth century. But Tucker largely neglected their overall structural effects on capitalism. So his critique of capitalism as fundamentally statist was almost completely abstracted from the features of nascent Gilded Age capitalism: state subsidies, the structural interlocking of corporations and state regulatory agencies, and the role of regulatory cartels in enforcing the extraction of rents from the consumer in the form of super-profits. Tucker was also almost entirely uninterested in speculating on the social forms, like cooperatives and other forms of mutualist practice, that might evolve in a free society. This was remedied by John Beverley Robinson, whose *The Economics of Liberty* (1916) discussed cooperative economics and mutual aid at great length within Tucker’s economic framework.

**Joseph Labadie (1850–1933), Dyer Daniel Lum (1839–1893), and  
Voltairine de Cleyre (1866–1912)**

Some members of Tucker’s individualist circle subsequently supplied material that was wanting in Tucker’s own thought. The first, Joseph Labadie, was more actively sympathetic to organized labor than Tucker. He started out as a writer for several Detroit socialist and labor papers and maintained his relations with them after he became a regular contributor to *Liberty*. Labadie attempted to bridge the gap between Tucker’s individualism and the labor movement, first with the Knights of Labor, and then with the quasi-syndicalism of the I.W.W. He argued within organs of the labor movement against democratic socialist and parliamentary approaches, and may have contributed to the anti-political tendencies behind the organization of the Wobblies. But unlike Tucker, he was

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112 Tucker, “On Picket Duty,” in *Instead of a Book*, 163.

optimistic about the prospects of labor organization to secure a reduction in hours without decreasing pay or speeding up production.<sup>113</sup>

Like Labadie, Dyer Lum tried to bridge the gap between Tucker's circle and the labor movement. And like Voltairine de Cleyre (about whom more below), he also tried to bridge the gap between native individualists and immigrant communists and syndicalists. He "established relations with both [the American anarchist movement's] major wings, but always remained close to the individualist philosophy."<sup>114</sup> Like Tucker and the other individualists, Lum came out of the general culture of reform, and participated in many of its currents before he arrived at anarchism. He was involved with the Labor Reform Party in the 1870s, and worked as a bookbinder and labor journalist. From this involvement he made connections with the Greenback Party and the eight-hour movement.<sup>115</sup> Under George's influence he blamed U.S. government land grants to corporations and its restrictions on homesteading for much of labor's dependent position. From the Greenback Party, Lum moved on to the Socialist Labor Party in 1880, and by the mid-80s was involved in the International Working People's Association.<sup>116</sup> But unlike most others in the International, Lum analyzed "wage slavery" from a radicalized laissez-faire perspective much like that of the individualists,<sup>117</sup> focusing on things like "the occupation and use land tenure, and the mutual bank money ideas."<sup>118</sup> His economic views were an unusual combination of laissez-faire and the Chicago labor movement's hatred of the "wages system."

After his disappointing experiences with electoral politics, Lum turned increasingly towards a strategy of uniting individualist economic analysis (based on "monopoly," "class legislation," etc.) with revolutionary anarchist politics. He "saw the Great Upheaval of the mid-1880s as a revolutionary moment."<sup>119</sup> From 1885 on, he tried to fuse "working-class organization, revolutionary strategy, and mutualist economics" into a united radical movement "designed to make anarchism a magnet to radicalized workers." He did not wish to unite

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<sup>113</sup> Martin, *Men Against the State*, 243–245.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>115</sup> F.H. Brooks, "Ideology, Strategy and Organization: Dyer Lum and the American Anarchist Movement," [https://www.academia.edu/7185438/Ideology\\_strategy\\_and\\_organization\\_Dyer\\_Lum\\_and\\_the\\_American\\_anarchist\\_movement](https://www.academia.edu/7185438/Ideology_strategy_and_organization_Dyer_Lum_and_the_American_anarchist_movement), 6–7 The original article appeared in *Labor History* 34, no. 1 (1993): 57–83. My pagination in this and subsequent citations is taken from the online version.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–10.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>118</sup> Martin, *Men Against the State*, 259.

<sup>119</sup> Brooks, "Ideology, Strategy, and Organization," 13.

the various groups behind any dogmatic party line, but only to create ties of affinity between them and enable them to work together tactically in “a pluralistic anarchistic coalition.”<sup>120</sup>

Lum rounded out his economic vision with the principle of producer cooperation, not only at the level of artisan production, but in large-scale industrial associations. In the latter regard he viewed labor unions not only as a weapon against existing evils, but as the nucleus of a future industrial organization formed around the “associated producers.”<sup>121</sup> In the post-Haymarket atmosphere, the anarchist movement was torn by dissension: first an individualist backlash against the immigrant communists’ violent revolutionary strategy, followed by a hardening of individualists like Tucker against them based on the two sides’ economic views. The movement’s divisions ossified into “two opposing camps: the ‘Boston anarchists,’ predominantly native-born, evolutionary and individualist, and the ‘Chicago anarchists,’ predominantly immigrant, revolutionary and collectivist.”<sup>122</sup> Still Lum not only defended the revolutionary tactics of the Haymarket martyrs, but continued to hope for improved relations between the two camps.<sup>123</sup> He met de Cleyre during this period.<sup>124</sup>

In the 1890s, Lum placed increasing stress on “a long-term strategy of inoculating trade unions with anarchist principles,” promoting producer cooperation and other anti-political strategies first within the Knights of Labor and then within the American Federation of Labor.<sup>125</sup> He became closely associated with the AFL and was on Gompers’s personal staff. His pamphlet *The Economics of Anarchy* was designed to introduce workers’ study groups to mutual banking, land reform, cooperation and other mutualist practices.<sup>126</sup>

Nevertheless he supported the new revolutionary wave of the 1890s—including a rather enthusiastic response to Alexander Berkman’s attempted assassination of Henry Frick, the manager at Homestead.<sup>127</sup> Lum deserves much credit for fusing so many disparate strands of radicalism into a uniquely American ideology. He tied a radical vision of working class power to a fairly sophisticated understanding of classical and mutualist economics, framed—

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 14–15.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 19–20.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 24–25, 27.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 27–28.

like de Cleyre's pamphlet "Anarchism and American traditions"—in terms of traditional American populist symbols. To quote Brooks:

Lum's ideological and strategic concerns, and his native and immigrant connections, came together in his anarchist alloy, his program for creating a unified anarchist movement. This alloy brought together individualist ideology and revolutionary strategy under the organizational umbrella of a labor-oriented IWPA.<sup>128</sup>

Voltairine de Cleyre, like Lum, opposed Tucker's dogmatic attempts to excommunicate communists from the "real" anarchist movement. Tucker approached the border of bigotry in his obsession with the "doctrinal errors" of others, condemning communist and collectivist anarchism as virtual state socialism on the grounds that seizing the means of production against the capitalist's will was an initiation of force. The communists in turn regarded markets and private property as tantamount to capitalism.<sup>129</sup> De Cleyre was originally an individualist. By the mid-1890s, under the influence of her association with Dyer Lum, she moved toward a more Proudhonian mutualism. As a result of living in the Philadelphia ghetto at the time, and perhaps also as a result of her weak physical constitution, she "felt greater sympathy than Tucker for the immigrant, the worker, the poor."<sup>130</sup> However, Avrich denies Emma Goldman's claim that de Cleyre later became an anarcho-communist. She believed until the end of her life that "the amount of administration required by Economic Communism would practically be a meddlesome government."<sup>131</sup>

Although the "Anarchism without adjectives" position (which de Cleyre shared with Dyer Lum) was originally developed by others, she became its most visible American exponent.<sup>132</sup> In her article "Anarchism" (*Free Society*, 1901), she criticized the dogmatists who believed that "no Anarchism is possible without [some] particular economic system as its guarantee."<sup>133</sup> She argued "that all these economic conceptions may be experimented with, and there is nothing un-Anarchistic about any of them until the element of compulsion

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>129</sup> Martin, *Men Against the State*, 221–227.

<sup>130</sup> P. Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 144–145.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 147–149.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 249–251.

<sup>133</sup> Voltairine de Cleyre, *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre*, eds. S. Presley and C. Sartwell (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2012), 72.



enters and obliges unwilling persons to remain in a community whose economic arrangements they do not agree to.”<sup>134</sup> She speculated that the various economic systems might be “advantageously tried in different localities.” In another article in 1907, she wrote that “Liberty and experiment alone can determine the best forms of society.”<sup>135</sup>

Meanwhile the strife between individualists and communists, reflected most notably in Tucker’s feud with Johann Most, led individualists to drift increasingly away from the rest of the anarchist movement, leaving them open to colonization by the right-wing. Even members of Tucker’s own circle, like Clarence Schwartz, began to characterize their position as “capitalist”; they were to a large extent absorbed into a 20th century movement in defense of “free enterprise” dominated by figures like Ludwig von Mises, Rose Wilder Lane, and Ayn Rand. But even at the height of right-wing “free enterprise” propaganda in the 20th century, the radical free market tradition persisted in the form of figures like Henry George, Jr., Franz Oppenheimer, and Albert Nock.

### Henry George, Jr. (1862–1916), Franz Oppenheimer (1864–1943), and Albert Jay Nock (1870–1945)

Henry George, Jr. explained the derivation of the term “privilege” as private law or class legislation benefiting one group of individuals at the expense of another:

Now the word “privilege” means not a natural, but an artificial condition. Even its derivation shows that. It comes from the Latin *privilegium*, meaning an ordinance in favor of a person; and *privilegium* comes from *privus*, private, and *lex* or *legem*, a law. Hence, in its essence, the word “privilege” means a private law, a special ordinance or a usage equivalent to a grant or an immunity in favor of a particular person.<sup>136</sup>

The primary effect of privileges is to “empower their holders to appropriate, without compensation or adequate compensation, a large or small share of the

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>135</sup> Avrich, *An American Anarchist*, 154.

<sup>136</sup> Henry George, Jr., *The Menace of Privilege* (New York: Macmillan, 1905), chapter 2, part 1, <http://www.progress.org/tptr/the-menace-of-privilege-chapter-one-first-half-4/>.

produce of labor.”<sup>137</sup> Privilege may be described, accordingly, as the use of law to enclose “natural opportunities” and charge for access to them.<sup>138</sup>

Franz Oppenheimer called himself a “liberal socialist”—i.e., “a socialist in that he regard[ed] capitalism as a system of exploitation, and capital revenue as the gain of that exploitation, but a liberal in that he believ[ed] in the harmony of a genuinely free market.”<sup>139</sup> Profit was a monopoly income, resulting from unequal exchange, accruing to the class which controlled access to the means of production.<sup>140</sup> This control was made possible only by the state. He contrasted “the State,” by which he meant “that summation of privileges and dominating positions which are brought into being by extra-economic power,” with “Society,” which was “the totality of concepts of all purely natural relations and institutions between man and man.”<sup>141</sup> He made a parallel distinction between the “economic means” to wealth, i.e., “one’s own labor and the equivalent exchange of one’s own labor for the labor of others,” and the “political means”: “the unrequited appropriation of the labor of others.”<sup>142</sup> The state was simply the “organization of the political means.”<sup>143</sup> The state existed for an economic purpose, exploitation, which could not be achieved without force; but it presupposed the preexistence of the economic means, which had been created by peaceful labor.<sup>144</sup> The economic means to wealth were production and voluntary exchange. The political means were violent robbery.<sup>145</sup>

Oppenheimer stipulated the contention of “bourgeois economics” that the division of society into “income-receiving classes and propertyless classes can only take place when all fertile lands have been occupied.”<sup>146</sup> Equality would exist so long as free land did, since, “in Turgot’s phrase, ‘No well man will be willing to work for another, as long as he can take for himself as much land as

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137 Ibid., chapter 2, conclusion, <http://www.progress.org/tpr/the-menace-of-privilege-chapter-two-second-half-2/>.

138 Ibid.

139 E. Heimann, “Franz Oppenheimer’s Economic Ideas,” *Social Research* 11, no. 1 (1944): 29.

140 Franz Oppenheimer, “A Post Mortem on Cambridge Economics (Part III),” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1944): 117.

141 Franz Oppenheimer, *The State*, trans. J. Gitterman (San Francisco: Fox & Wilkes, 1997), lvi.

142 Ibid., 14.

143 Ibid., 15.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid., 14.

146 Ibid., 6.

he wants to cultivate.<sup>147</sup> Where he differed was in his understanding of *how* the land had come to be completely appropriated. Were the natural right of property the basis of all appropriation, Oppenheimer argued, it would have been impossible for the land to become fully appropriated to the extent that it was necessary for laborers to pay rent for access to it. Rather, the land had been politically appropriated by conquest, so that even vacant and unimproved land could be held out of use by the artificial property titles of a ruling class unless labor was willing to pay for access to it.

The states of Europe had their origin in barbarian conquerors who appropriated the soil; they retained the sword afterward to make laws for the conquered, through institutions which persist to the present day. Hence "the law has always been made with a view to preserve, as much as possible, that appropriation of the soil, that artificial right of property, and that system of government" which they first established.<sup>148</sup> Since a class state can only occur after complete occupation of land, and such complete occupation has never occurred economically, it follows that the land has been "preempted politically"; the scarcity of land which prevents settlement by labor is legal, not natural.<sup>149</sup> The land has been universally appropriated by political means: the entire supply of vacant land has been engrossed by one landed aristocracy or another, and their artificial titles used either to exclude laborers who might otherwise cultivate vacant land as an alternative to wage employment, or to collect tribute from those who have rightfully appropriated the land through cultivation.<sup>150</sup> Oppenheimer also criticized the labor-fund doctrine in language similar to Hodgskin, noting that "material instruments, for the most part, are not saved in a former period, but are manufactured in the same period in which they are employed."<sup>151</sup>

Albert Jay Nock, a Georgist, was influenced by Oppenheimer's view of the state. The state, he said,

originated in conquest and confiscation ... It contemplated primarily the continuous economic exploitation of one class by another, and it concerned itself with only so much freedom and security as was consistent with this primary intention ... Its primary function ... was ... for the

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147 Franz Oppenheimer, "A Post Mortem on Cambridge Economics (Part II)," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 2, no. 4 (1943): 534.

148 Ibid.

149 Oppenheimer, *The State*, 8.

150 Oppenheimer, "A Post Mortem on Cambridge Economics (Part II)," 535.

151 Oppenheimer, "A Post Mortem on Cambridge Economics (Part III)," 122.

purpose of maintaining the stratification of society into an owning and exploiting class, and a propertyless dependent class.<sup>152</sup>

Moreover, the sole invariable characteristic of the State is the economic exploitation of one class by another. In this sense, every State known to history is a class-State.<sup>153</sup>

Like Oppenheimer, he argued that the state furthers exploitation of labor by restricting, on behalf of a ruling class, labor's access to the means of production. By setting up such barriers, the ruling class is able to charge tribute in the form of unpaid labor, for allowing access on its own terms. It is only because of the state's enforced separation of labor from the means of production that labor acquires the perverse habit of thinking of work as "something to be *given*" by the employing classes as a boon: "Our natural resources, while much depleted, are still great; our population is very thin, running something like twenty or twenty-five to the square mile; and some millions of this population are at the moment 'unemployed,' and likely to remain so because no one will or can 'give them work.'"<sup>154</sup>

### Conclusion: Post-War Market Anarchism

No overview of market anarchism would be complete without at least mentioning the postwar American libertarian and anarcho-capitalist movements. In the interest of brevity I will only summarize the issues and my view of them here; they will be discussed in more detail in my colleague Roderick Long's chapter on anarchism and libertarianism.

As I mentioned earlier, American free market anarchism was left open to cooptation by the Right after the ideological split with communist and syndicalist anarchists in the late 19th century. Much of it was so co-opted, and shifted its strategic ground—much like Marx's "vulgar political economists" of the previous century—to the defense of capitalism. After the war especially, Ayn Rand and the Austrian school of economics became major influences. The thought of Mises, Rothbard and their associates became near-dogma

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152 Albert Jay Nock, *Our Enemy, the State* (1935; reprint, Delavan, Wisc.: Hallberg Publishing Corp., 1983), 37.

153 Ibid., 40.

154 Ibid., 82n.

to the mainstream of the American libertarian movement as it developed from the late 1960s on.

I consider “anarcho-capitalism” as such to be entirely separate from the historic lineage of anarchism. Nevertheless many strands within it are arguably surviving, if distorted, offshoots of historic individualist anarchism. And even the avowed anarcho-capitalist movement has included individuals or sub-groups who were sympathetic to critiques of mainstream American capitalism and corporate power, or who gravitated towards engagement with the Left. The most prominent example is the flirtation with the New Left by Karl Hess and Murray Rothbard in the 1970s. The Libertarian Party itself was formed from an ad hoc alliance of radical libertarian dissidents from Young Americans for Freedom and libertarian leftists from SDS disgruntled by its drift towards Maoist authoritarianism. Samuel Edward Konkin III’s Movement of the Libertarian Left was modeled on the Rothbard-Hess precedent, and Konkin made Oppenheimer’s distinction between the economic and political means the basis of his agorist class theory, which he erected as an alternative to Marxian class theory. Although I do not regard self-identified anarcho-capitalists as traditional anarchists, many of them—especially those who apply Rothbard’s principles most consistently—are useful allies against corporate capitalism. Rothbardian anarcho-capitalism is self-liquidating because corporate capitalism and most labor exploitation could not survive a thorough-going application of their principles.

Even after the rise of the modern, avowedly capitalistic American libertarian movement in the 1970s, the older socialistic models of market anarchism continued to coexist alongside it. R.A. Wilson, among other things the coauthor of *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*, appealed to this tradition. There was also a large-scale resurgence of left-wing market anarchism in the late 1990s which used free market concepts as the basis of a radical critique of corporate capitalism. Larry Gambone, a prolific publisher of pamphlets through Red Lion Press and primary organizer of the now-defunct Voluntary Cooperation Movement, attempted to revive Proudhonian mutualism as an alternative to the dominant anarchist narratives of the time. The VCM included some more-or-less market-oriented individuals in the UK like Jonathan Simcock, from the loose circle around Colin Ward and Freedom Press, as well as the American individualist Joe Peacott and his Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade.

Roderick Long, a professor of philosophy at Auburn University, began writing left-wing critiques of corporate capitalism from a Rothbardian economic perspective in the 1990s. Beginning with my pamphlet *Iron Fist Behind the Invisible Hand* in 2001, I attempted to revive an updated, more-or-less Tuckerite anarchist economic theory. Long and I, and a number of other sim-

ilarly-minded thinkers who left Konkin's Movement of the Libertarian Left over internal disputes, coalesced to form the Alliance of the Libertarian Left (ALL). Although the initial core of the group came from an anarcho-capitalist background influenced by Rothbard and Konkin, it included people from outside that tradition (I, for example, have never identified as an an-cap and consider myself a socialist). And the original core continued to be diluted by additional members from Georgist or social anarchist backgrounds, or followers of Elinor Ostrom. Finally, there is the Center for a Stateless Society, a left-wing market anarchist thinktank that grew directly out of the ALL circle. Although some of its core members, as with ALL, are from a Rothbardian and Konkinite background, even most of the Rothbardians have come to disavow their former anarcho-capitalist label, and others explicitly identify as socialists.

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## Anarchism and Religion

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### Introduction

The intersection of religious studies and anarchism has proved a fertile ground for a variety of analyses, particularly in recent years. Students and practitioners of religion have taken anarchism more seriously, and students and practitioners of anarchism have taken religion more seriously. The encounter can lead to tensions and expose unbridgeable differences, but in most cases explorations have been fruitful, opening up and investigating new avenues of thought and practice.

This dialogue is constituted by a variety of rather different conversations: sometimes anarchists are revisiting their assessment of religion; sometimes religious scholars are articulating a theology which engages with anarchism; sometimes the focus is on how specific anarchists approached religion; sometimes general parallels are drawn between anarchism and religion; sometimes religious scriptures are interpreted to point to anarchist politics; and so on. In other words, the encounter between religion and anarchism can concentrate on very different facets of either, and involves very different approaches, methodologies, modes and tones of enquiry. That variety reflects not only the different themes of interest to both anarchism and religion, but also different ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches.

The aim of this chapter is to sketch out some of the ways in which anarchism and religion intersect and influence each other's imagination. The aim is not to systematically present all the scholarship there is in the area, although an effort was made to encompass a high number of sources to illustrate and compile an accurate map of the different *types* of scholarship buzzing around this topic. As often with typologies, the divisions and categories proposed might at times be rather arbitrary, so they should not be interpreted too strictly but rather heuristically, as an attempt to overview and catalogue the territory.

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\* This is a revised version of A. Christoyannopoulos, "Anarchism and Religious Studies," in *The Anarchist Imagination: Anarchism Encounters the Humanities and the Social Sciences*, eds. C. Levy and S. Newman (London: Routledge, 2017).

The chapter is structured in four sections: the first considers some classic anarchist quarrels with religion and its institutions; the second surveys the scholarship on anarchist interpretations of founding religious scriptures and figures; the third discusses the growing interest in anarchist “theology” as distinct from scriptural exegesis; and the fourth points to the variety of historical studies on specific religious anarchist thinkers, communities and movements.

It will quickly become obvious that the dominant religion in the scholarship, and hence in this chapter, is Christianity. One reason for this might be that (at least according to the traditional narrative) anarchist thought and practice cut many of its teeth in societies in which Christianity and its institutions tended to dominate. Nonetheless, even though the main religious interlocutor in this chapter is Christianity, other traditions are still cited whenever possible and appropriate, and the arguments which apply where anarchism and Christianity meet often apply in comparable ways to other traditions too.

### Anarchist Critiques of Religion

It seems sensible to begin this overview by acknowledging the frequent suspicion of, and, in some cases, outright hostility toward, religion among many anarchists. This section outlines briefly the critical views on religion expressed by several important early anarchists, as these have framed subsequent encounters between anarchism and religion.<sup>1</sup> Anarchist critiques of religion target both its institutional aspects and religious belief itself, with varying emphases depending on the individual thinker.

The essence of the anarchist critique of religion is that it is a source of inequality and injustice, a lie used by the priestly class and the state to increase their power by keeping the populace in fear and ignorance. Emma Goldman put it succinctly in 1908:

Religion is a superstition that originated in man's mental inability to solve natural phenomena. The Church is an organized institution that has always been a stumbling block to progress. Organized churchism has stripped religion of its naiveté and primitiveness. It has turned religion

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<sup>1</sup> For other overviews of classic anarchist criticisms and their main proponents, see, for instance, H. Barclay, “Anarchist Confrontations with Religion,” in *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, eds. N. Jun and S. Wahl (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010), 169–188; J. Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991); and N. Walter, “Anarchism and Religion,” *The Raven* 25, no. 7 (1994): 3–9.

into a nightmare that oppresses the human soul and holds the mind in bondage.<sup>2</sup>

This critique was articulated earlier, by the anti-clerical, materialist and atheist writers of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of whom, such as the atheist priest Jean Meslier, also expressed anarchistic hostility to property, law and government. William Godwin, who is regarded generally as the progenitor of modern anarchism, cited the Baron d'Holbach's atheist treatise *The System of Nature* (1770) as a key influence on his own thinking.

In *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), Godwin did not dwell on the issue of the existence of God or the truth of religion. His main concern regarding religion was its lack of utility to the cause of moral improvement. Godwin argued that literature, education and political justice lead to moral improvement; there is no role for religion, which merely enslaves humanity through shame and superstition, and is only able to do so because it is supported by government.<sup>3</sup> Further, religious establishments and the demand for religious conformity require "blind submission" and thus turn people into hypocrites who must outwardly profess adherence to the articles of their faith even when they disagree with them or do not believe them.<sup>4</sup> The clergy, who are supposed to provide moral instruction to the laity, are intellectually inflexible, hypocritical men "whose business it should seem to be to dupe their contemporaries into the practice of virtue."<sup>5</sup> Godwin also argued that the government should not compel anyone to support a religious institution: "If public worship be conformable to reason, reason without doubt will prove adequate to its vindication and support. If it be from God, it is profanation to imagine that it stands in need of the alliance of the state. It must be in an eminent degree artificial and exotic, if it be incapable of preserving itself in existence, otherwise than by the inauspicious interference of political institution."<sup>6</sup> Finally, he argued against the suppression of religious and political "heresy," on the grounds that ignorance does not lead to virtue and that the exploration of different opinions is not subversive; it is only when a government attempts to suppress opinions that citizens will disturb the peace by fighting back. The outcome is especially violent when governments support particular religions: "The moment govern-

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2 A.K. Shulman, *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, 3rd edition (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 1996), 7.

3 W. Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Luke White, 1793), I, 28–29.

4 *Ibid.*, II, 151–152.

5 *Ibid.*, II, 154.

6 *Ibid.*, II, 155.

ment descends to wear the badge of a sect, religious war is commenced, the world is disgraced with inexpiable broils and deluged with blood.”<sup>7</sup>

Like Godwin, Peter Kropotkin argued that morality did not depend on religion. In “Anarchist Morality” (1898), he theorized that “the moral sense is a natural faculty in us like the sense of smell or of touch.”<sup>8</sup> All animal and human societies possess the principle of treating others as we would like to be treated under similar circumstance; this natural, innate principle has been “filched” by law and religion “to cloak their own wares, their injunctions for the benefit of the conqueror, the exploiter, the priest.”<sup>9</sup> Not only is religion unnecessary for morality, but the state and the church, working together to dominate and oppress mankind through violence and fear, have poisoned and perverted our moral sense, which has led to a society in which human nature is degraded by exploitation and servitude. In order to recover its true morality, we must reject law, religion and authority, all of which conspire to perpetuate submissiveness.

Both Mikhail Bakunin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon developed extended critiques of religion that included accounts of its origin and development. In *God and the State*, Bakunin suggests that although belief in divinity was a necessary stage in humanity’s evolution from a purely animal state, it is a form of slavery and collective insanity that must be eradicated. For Bakunin, the idea of God as a perfect being creates a necessarily negative view of humanity as God’s opposite and inferior: “God being truth, justice, goodness, beauty, power, and life, man is falsehood, iniquity, evil, ugliness, impotence, and death. God being master, man is the slave.”<sup>10</sup> All religions “debase and corrupt” humanity by destroying reason, encouraging ignorance, dishonoring human labor, killing human pride and dignity, and making humans cruel toward each other.<sup>11</sup> Religions persist because the majority of people are still ignorant, weighed down by economic oppression, and deprived of the education and leisure to emancipate themselves from the idea of God. People turn to “the dram-shop and the church, debauchery of the body or debauchery of the mind” in order to escape the misery of their wretched material and intellectual conditions. Only a social revolution “will have the power to close at the same time all the

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7 Ibid., II, 160.

8 P. Kropotkin, *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed. R. Baldwin (New York: Dover, 1970), 98.

9 Ibid.

10 M. Bakunin, *God and the State* (New York: Dover, 1970), 24.

11 Ibid., 25.

dram-shops and all the churches" by allowing the full development of humanity in freedom.<sup>12</sup>

Bakunin took the non-existence of God for granted, but Proudhon interrogated the meaning of the idea of God, suggesting in *What Is Property?* that the original, primitive idea of Divinity has never been successfully defined and that anthropomorphism distorts or disfigures the idea of God. Further distortion results from the treatment of God as a possession: "Represented in such monstrous form, God became everywhere the property of man and the state."<sup>13</sup> This is the origin of the corruption of morals by religion and is the source of pious hatreds and holy wars. Freedom of religion and separation of religious and secular authority will reduce these destructive influences of religion; religion is not, however, the primary cause of inequality and suffering, which stem from humans being at war with themselves.<sup>14</sup>

Proudhon extended his examination of the idea of God in *System of Economical Contradictions*. He introduces the work with a lengthy consideration of what he calls the hypothesis of God, explaining that "God is nothing more than collective instinct or universal reason"—a way for humans to understand their own self-consciousness within the world.<sup>15</sup> Although he argues that the existence of God cannot be affirmed without empirical demonstration, which is lacking, he concludes that the "hypothesis" still stands because it cannot be disproven. In part of his analysis, Proudhon elaborates on the classic problem of why evil exists in a world created and ruled by a benevolent God, arguing that if God exists, he has not only allowed evil to exist in the world, but has created the conditions for human suffering by leaving us at the mercy of our own intellectual and moral limitations: "God, whom faith represents as a tender father and a prudent master, abandons us to the fatality of our incomplete conceptions; he digs the ditch under our feet; he causes us to move blindly: and then, at every fall, he punishes us as rascals."<sup>16</sup> In other words, if God is in fact benevolent, he would not abandon us to our own worst natures. Since he has, if he exists, so abandoned us, he is evil and "a being deserving of hell."<sup>17</sup> As a consequence,

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12 Ibid., 16–17.

13 P.-J. Proudhon, *What Is Property?* eds. and trans. D. Kelley and B. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 21.

14 Ibid., 20–21.

15 P.-J. Proudhon, *System of Economical Contradictions*, vol. 1, trans. B. Tucker (1888; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 5.

16 Ibid., 445.

17 Ibid., 446.

the first duty of man, on becoming intelligent and free, is to continually hunt the idea of God out of his mind and conscience. For God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we do not depend at all on his authority. We arrive at knowledge in spite of him, at comfort in spite of him, at society in spite of him; every step we take in advance is a victory in which we crush Divinity.<sup>18</sup>

Intellectual honesty requires an acknowledgement that we cannot know whether God is real or not, but since he is our enemy, then “practical atheism” is the only reasonable course to follow.<sup>19</sup>

Bakunin’s and Proudhon’s negative views of God are echoed in Sébastien Faure’s “Does God Exist? Twelve Proofs of the Nonexistence of God” (1908), in which Faure argued that if God exists, then he is responsible for both physical and moral evil, and humans are slaves.<sup>20</sup> Faure was not, however, taking the idea of God’s existence seriously, as Proudhon does, but using this argument to attack the religious conception of God as benevolent and perfect. Like the other anarchist thinkers considered so far, Faure regarded religion as having oppressed humanity by encouraging superstition and demanding submissiveness. In “The God Pestilence” (1887), Johann Most attacked the Jewish and Christian God as a cruel despot, a specter fabricated by scoundrels, and a pestilence of the mind.<sup>21</sup> Max Stirner also invoked the imagery of specters, arguing in “Art and Religion” (1842) that God, the spirit, and so on are fixed ideas, or “wheels in the head” that haunt us; those who cling to such fixed ideas, particularly to the idea of the divine, are fools.<sup>22</sup> This critique of religion, however, is part of Stirner’s general critique of fixed ideas, which include conventional morality, legality, truthfulness, and love.

Errico Malatesta offered a somewhat different perspective on religion. While certainly agreeing with other anarchist thinkers that “religion ought to wither away along with every cult through which men’s ignorance and priests’ cunning have manifested themselves,” Malatesta argued that “the religious question ... is an economic question,” and that failure to grasp this fact is what

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18 Ibid., 448.

19 Ibid., 468.

20 S. Faure, “Does God Exist? Twelve Proofs of the Nonexistence of God” [1908], *The Anarchist Library*, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/sebastien-faure-does-god-exist>.

21 J. Most, “The God Pestilence” [1877], *Anarchy Archives*, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/Archives/bright/most/godpest.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/Archives/bright/most/godpest.html).

22 M. Stirner, “Art and Religion” [1842], trans. L. Stepelevich, *The Anarchist Library*, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/max-stirner-art-and-religion>.

has prevented “the apostles of Freethought” from converting the masses.<sup>23</sup> Dismissing the issue of religious truth as effectively irrelevant, Malatesta focuses on the organization of the church, pointing out that it matches the organization of the state in every way except that the church uses fraud rather than force to persuade the people to turn their possessions over to it.<sup>24</sup> He also points out that if the priestly class’s contribution to society is prayer, it makes a living out of praying and thus evades its obligation to do actual labor. As Malatesta puts it, the priest is “nothing but a collector of ecclesiastical taxes.”<sup>25</sup>

While these anarchist thinkers share a negative view of religion that can, as we suggested above, be boiled down to certain core elements, this brief survey shows that not all anarchist critiques of religion are the same. It is important to consider that each critique is embedded within a matrix of related ideas about authority, equality, the nature of the world, human psychology, and so on. Another important aspect of these critiques is that although these thinkers targeted Christianity, they intended their criticisms to apply to all religions. Finally, as Colin Ward has noted, anarchists and other nineteenth-century political thinkers believed that religion was on the wane and would fade away, especially if encouraged to do so through education of the masses and amelioration of their living conditions.<sup>26</sup> This has not happened: the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen a resurgence of religious commitment that presents a serious challenge to the idea that religion will inevitably fade away. Anarchists must still, then, reckon with religion and its impact on the societies they wish to change.

The anarchist critique of religion is certainly open to challenge and qualification. There is not enough space here to address the complex history of the relationship between religion(s) and the state, which includes persecution of religious groups by the state and by other religious groups, as well as power struggles between secular and religious authorities. To give just one example, during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, radical religious groups such as the Anabaptists were both anticlerical and opposed to secular authority;<sup>27</sup> modern history, too, provides examples of religiously-motivated

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23 E. Malatesta, *The Method of Freedom: An Errico Malatesta Reader*, ed. D. Turcato (Oakland, Calif: AK Press, 2014), 42.

24 *Ibid.*, 25–26.

25 *Ibid.*, 27.

26 C. Ward, *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

27 See H.-J. Goetz, “Radical Religiosity in the German Reformation,” in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 70–85.

protest and resistance. From an atheist perspective, however, which holds that religion is at best a misperception and at worst a deception peddled by elites to keep the masses in stupefied submission, empirical counter-examples to the narrative of church collusion with the state do not attenuate the forcefulness of their criticisms of religion.

The view of God as a despotic master may also be challenged: significant currents within religious traditions have been critical of their own patriarchal structures, and “gods” are not always or only defined as “masters.” As Alexis-Baker notes, in the Christian Bible, “God is also identified as Creator, Liberator, Teacher, Healer, Guide, Provider, Protector and Love,” so that anarchists and Christians *alike* who are “making monarchical language the primary descriptor of God” in fact “misrepresent” his “full character.”<sup>28</sup> To understand God as a despot is therefore to misunderstand the varieties of the multifaceted understandings of “God” even within the Christian tradition. Again, however, since from an atheist perspective a multifaceted God is still a delusion, such views may have little impact.

For some anarchists, the same consistent critical thinking which leads to anarchism must also lead to atheism.<sup>29</sup> Some go as far as to almost see an avowed anarchist’s atheism as one of the measures of their commitment to an anarchist approach. Certainly atheists have been strongly represented in the writings of many classical anarchists and in many anarcho-syndicalist circles. Atheism is not, however, a strictly necessary precondition for reaching anarchist conclusions: as the following sections of this chapter show, the two sets of conclusions do not depend on each other, and even though they can reinforce each other, a dismissal of all religion following atheist arguments is analytically separable from the dismissal of the religious, political and economic establishment following anarchist arguments.

Despite the substantial (though varied) hostility to religion in anarchist milieus, many anarchists today nonetheless display considerable tolerance of their religious comrades, an openness to respectful yet critical discussions of unfamiliar perspectives, and a willingness to leave some of their differences on religion aside in their shared contemporary struggles against various forms of oppression. Indeed, as Barclay shows, even several classical anarchists had some sympathy for some aspects of the religions they encountered—such as the emphasis on love and mutualism in the teachings of Jesus, the radical politics of

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28 N. Alexis-Baker, “Embracing God, Rejecting Masters: On Christianity, Anarchism and the State,” *The Utopian* 5 (2006): 76.

29 See, for example, T. Gibson, “Should We Mock at Religion?” *The Raven* 25, no. 7 (1994): 8–10.



some religious sects and movements, and so on.<sup>30</sup> Kropotkin's famous entry on anarchism in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* provides one example of this,<sup>31</sup> and Gérard Bessière's *Jésus selon Proudhon* discusses Proudhon's productive fascination with the figure of Jesus and his conclusion that Jesus was a social and moral reformer whose message was corrupted and "spiritualized" by Paul and his generation.<sup>32</sup> John Clark's "Anarchism" entry in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* also paints a detailed picture of "anarchist tendencies across history that have held a spiritual view of reality," thus showing that the meeting of anarchist and religious currents is not new.<sup>33</sup> Hostility to all aspects of religion, therefore, is not a trait universally shared by all anarchists.

Furthermore, as some scholars have argued, certain possibly unnoticed or unacknowledged parallels can be identified between anarchism and religion. Aurelio Orensanz's *Anarquía y Cristianismo* discusses the strong similarities between several central Christian themes and values and those propounded by anarchists (in particular Bakunin, interestingly);<sup>34</sup> Keith Hebden's "Building a Dalit World in the Shell of the Old" examines the parallels between anarchism (as defined by Colin Ward) and Dalit values and practice;<sup>35</sup> and Demetrio Castro Alfin's "Anarquismo y Protestantismo" considers the parallels between the anticlericalism of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Andalusian anarchist peasants and that of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century protestant agitators.<sup>36</sup> In other words, certain views and practices can be found in both anarchist and religious groups.

Finally, it is worth atheist anarchists bearing in mind that too cavalier a dismissal of religion can have regrettable effects in alienating potential allies and comrades emerging from different journeys yet keen to share and build bridges. Erica Lagalisse's "Marginalizing Magdalena" examines some of the

30 Barclay, "Anarchist Confrontations with Religion," 170, 172.

31 P. Kropotkin, "Anarchism," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition (New York: The Encyclopedia Britannica Co., 1910), 919.

32 G. Bessière, *Jésus selon Proudhon: la « messianose » et la naissance du christianisme* (Paris: Cerf, 2007).

33 J. Clark, "Anarchism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. B. Taylor (London: Continuum, 2005), 49.

34 A. Orensanz, *Anarquía y Cristianismo* (Madrid: Mañana, 1978).

35 K. Hebden, "Building a Dalit World in the Shell of the Old: Conversations Between Dalit Indigenous Practice and Western Anarchist Thought," in *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives*, ed. A. Christoyannopoulos (Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 145–165.

36 D. Castro Alfin, "Anarquismo y Protestantismo: reflexiones sobre un viejo argumento," *Studia Historica: Historia Contemporánea* 16 (1998): 197–220.

pitfalls of the typical antireligious prejudice among anarchists by reflecting (from a feminist, anti-colonial perspective) on the marginalization of a female Oaxacan activist during a speaking tour in Canada.<sup>37</sup> What can be dismissed as “religion” includes many aspects and phenomena (beliefs, communal practices, moral commitments, etc.), and whilst anarchists might converge in denouncing domination and oppression, it may be that today many of those other facets of “religion” are not the main sources of domination—indeed, as many secular anarchists have recognized, there is much to learn from religious comrades in the struggle against structures of oppression (including their own). Besides, if Paul-François Tremlett is correct that in early anarchist writings, “religion” as a category was formed and functioned as “a cipher for thinking about the past” (whether as something that was looked back at nostalgically or as something that needed to be overcome), then perhaps the broader context has evolved enough for the time to have come to reconsider the variety of facets and experiences of “religion” and work with those religious people who share many of the goals of fellow anarchists.<sup>38</sup>

### Anarchist Exegesis

Having outlined and discussed some of the traditional suspicions of religion among anarchists, it is time to look at examples of more favorable interactions. One example of a positive encounter comes from studies that interpret religious scriptures to advocate anarchism or to otherwise imply anarchist conclusions—that is to say, anarchist exegesis. Here, the “anarchism” is in the political deductions of those scriptural interpretations, in other words in the criticisms of the state, capitalism and other structures of oppression—including indeed many aspects of “religion”—that these interpreters derive from major religious texts. This approach therefore refuses to dismiss all religion *a priori*, reads foundational religious texts, and finds their line of reasoning to lead to anarchist conclusions. Alexandre Christoyannopoulos's *Christian Anarchism* considers many examples of notorious anarchist exegeses and weaves them together to present a relatively generic and systematic anarchist

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37 E.M. Lagalisse, “‘Marginalizing Magdalena’: Intersections of Gender and the Secular in Anarchoindigenist Solidarity Activism,” *Signs* 36 (2011): 653–678.

38 P.-F. Tremlett, “On the Formation and Function of the Category ‘Religion’ in Anarchist Writing,” *Culture and Religion* 5 (2004): 367.

interpretation of the Christian gospels.<sup>39</sup> Here is not the place to discuss in depth the precise contribution of every Christian anarchist exegete, but a brief outline of the main interpretations might help illustrate some of the variety of styles and focuses involved.

The author who is traditionally cited in *anarchist* circles as the primary example of Christian anarchism is Leo Tolstoy, and the most frequently cited book is his *Kingdom of God Is within You*.<sup>40</sup> In it, Tolstoy covers at length topics such as military service, state violence and revolutionary methods, and defends his interpretation of Christianity against what he sees as perversions of it. That book, however, was originally written in response to the reception of his earlier and more methodical exegesis published as either *What I Believe* or *My Religion*, which outlines Tolstoy's analysis of Jesus' teaching in more meticulous detail.<sup>41</sup> Very interesting too is Tolstoy's harmonized and translated version of the gospels ("The Gospel According to Leo," as it were), which by what it includes and excludes illustrates how Tolstoy interprets the four canonical scriptures.<sup>42</sup> As an exegete, however, Tolstoy was quite a maverick. He rejected and ignored everything he saw as irrational, and focused squarely on the moral teaching of Jesus. He also ignored much of the Old Testament, Paul's epistles and the rest of the New Testament. Predictably, therefore, his exegetical approach has been widely criticized, and it may not be surprising that even in *Christian* radical circles Tolstoy tends to be approached with caution. Nonetheless, one of the merits of his exegesis is its stubborn refusal to shy away from the logical implications of Jesus' teaching with regards to the state's perpetration and legitimization of violence—a topic on which he writes as well as can be expected from the author of acclaimed works of fiction.

Less unconventional as an exegete and more respected as a theologian is Jacques Ellul. A prolific scholar, he wrote dozens of volumes, several of which interpret specific books and passages of the Bible. He gained particular notoriety for his critique of what he called our *société technicienne* (usually translated as "technological society"), a society in which the obsession with efficiency overrides ethical concerns. His most explicitly anarchist contribution to

39 A. Christoyannopoulos, *Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel* (Exeter, U.K.: Imprint Academic, 2010).

40 L. Tolstoy, "The Kingdom of God Is Within You" [1893], in *The Kingdom of God and Peace Essays*, trans. A. Maude (New Delhi: Rupa, 2001), 3–423.

41 L. Tolstoy, *What I Believe* [1884], trans. F. Mayo (London: C.W. Daniel, 1902).

42 L. Tolstoy, *The Four Gospels Harmonised and Translated* (1881; reprint, London: Walter Scott, 1895); L. Tolstoy, "The Gospel in Brief" [1881], in *A Confession and the Gospel in Brief*, trans. A. Maude (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 146–238.

biblical exegesis, however, came in the chapter "Anarchism and Christianity"<sup>43</sup> and the short book *Anarchy and Christianity*.<sup>44</sup> In these works, Ellul offers an explicitly anarchist interpretation of several Bible passages, including some largely ignored by Tolstoy, such as the Old Testament Book of Samuel, "render unto Caesar" (which Tolstoy deals with rather hastily) and the Book of Revelation. Although he does not match the piercing eloquence of Tolstoy's denunciation of state violence, both Ellul's coverage of the Bible and his theological approach are more conventional than Tolstoy's, making him more amenable for contemporary Christians to identify and engage with.

Several other writers have published explicitly anarchistic exegeses of Christian scripture. One somewhat controversial example is Vernard Eller's *Christian Anarchy*, which proposes a reading of Romans 13 which has not always been well received by Christian anarchists and poses problems for secular anarchists, yet nonetheless articulates clear criticisms of the state despite the counter-intuitive method it proposes to subvert it.<sup>45</sup> Other anarchist exegetes include Niels Kjær's "Kristendom og Anarkisme," Michael Elliott's *Freedom, Justice, and Christian Counter-Culture*, Dave Andrews' *Christi-Anarchy*, Matt Russell's "Anarchism and Christianity," and Mark Van Steenwyk's *That Holy Anarchist*, each of which reflects on Jesus' teaching, often contrasts it with the mainstream church interpretation of it, and gives examples of Christian communities that have tried harder than the mainstream to remain faithful to it.<sup>46</sup>

Further examples include David Alan Black's *Christian Archy*, which revisits the meaning of God's "kingdom" in the New Testament;<sup>47</sup> Tom O'Golo's *Christ? No! Jesus? Yes!*, which argues that Jesus and his first followers were

43 J. Ellul, "Anarchism and Christianity," in *Jesus and Marx: From Gospel to Ideology*, trans. J. Main Hanks (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 153–177; J. Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991).

44 See note 2 above.

45 V. Eller, *Christian Anarchy: Jesus' Primacy Over the Powers* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 1987).

46 N. Kjær, "Kristendom og Anarkisme" [1972], <http://archive.org/details/KristendomOgAnarkisme>; M.C. Elliott, *Freedom, Justice and Christian Counter-Culture* (London: SCM Press 1990); D. Andrews, *Christi-Anarchy: Discovering a Radical Spirituality of Compassion* (Oxford: Lion Press 1999); M. Russell, "Anarchism and Christianity," *Infoshop News*, 2004, <http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=04/09/14/5885651>; M. Van Steenwyk, *That Holy Anarchist: Reflections on Christianity and Anarchism* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Missio Dei, 2012).

47 D.A. Black, *Christian Archy* (Gonzalez, Fla.: Energion Publications, 2009).

anarchists and that Paul corrupted Christianity;<sup>48</sup> Greg Boyd's "The Bible, Government and Christian Anarchy," which comments on a variety of biblical texts in support of an anarchist interpretation;<sup>49</sup> Nekeisha Alexis-Baker's "The Church as Resistance to Racism and Nation," which looks to scripture to describe how the church can embody an opposition to both the idea of race and the nation-state;<sup>50</sup> and Peter Pick's "A Theology of Revolutions," which analyses Abiezer Coppe's use of the Bible as a weapon against the earthly authorities of his day.<sup>51</sup> There are therefore numerous examples of explicitly anarchist exegeses, many written relatively recently.

Also noteworthy, because cited by contemporary Christian anarchists, are exegeses which, even though not explicitly anarchistic, come very close to it because of their criticism of violence or of political elites, such as John Howard Yoder's *Politics of Jesus*, Ched Myers' *Binding the Strong Man*, and Walter Wink's studies of the "powers."<sup>52</sup> A further example worth a short discussion is Shane Clairborne and Chris Haw's *Jesus for President* with its associated website, YouTube clips, speaking tours and DVDs.<sup>53</sup> Written primarily for US Christians and adopting a format which is quite lively and colorful (it is full of drawings, pictures, and other graphics), their book aspires to "provoke the Christian political imagination" beyond the narrow confines of electoral politics. However, perhaps to minimize the risk of alienating its readership and maximize the chances of convincing it, the word "anarchism" seems deliberately and systematically avoided. Yet its exegesis, its commentary on church history, and its reflections on the political engagement of contemporary Christians are all

48 T. O'Golo, *Christ? No! Jesus? Yes!: A Radical Reappraisal of a Very Important Life* (St Andrews, U.K.: Zimbo Press, 2011).

49 G. Boyd, "The Bible, Government and Christian Anarchy" *Reknew*, 2008, <http://reknew.org/2008/01/the-bible-government-and-christian-anarchy/>.

50 N. Alexis-Baker, "The Church as Resistance to Racism and Nation: A Christian, Anarchist Perspective," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 166–201.

51 P. Pick, "A Theology of Revolutions: Abiezer Coppe and the Uses of Tradition," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 30–46.

52 J.H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994); C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988); W. Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); W. Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986); W. Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1992).

53 S. Clairborne and C. Haw, *Jesus for President: Politics for Ordinary Radicals* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2008).

strikingly anarchistic, similar to and indeed often relying on the writings of several of the authors cited above.

In a sense, these exegeses tend to focus their direct criticism on the state, and to some extent the church, more than on capitalism, even though many secular anarchists today see capitalism as at least as dangerous as the state. Of course, the precise nature of the overlap, interaction and mutual reinforcement of “the state” and “capitalism” is complex and evolving, and whether there even is a single and primary source of “evil” in the global political economy is debatable. Besides, Christian anarchists do frequently interpret scriptural passages as challenging contemporary economic orthodoxies, and they do frequently criticize the capitalist system on that basis. However, their arguments from scripture to the state seem to require fewer logical steps than those from scripture to capitalism. It is presumably easier to interpret ancient scripture to denounce the political and religious establishments (although of course, the state today is a rather complex phenomenon too) than it is to denounce the complex web of interests and the instruments of oppression that form the “establishment” in the globalized capitalist economy. Still, whether borrowing Hardt and Negri’s notion of “empire” in pamphlets such as Jason Barr’s “Radical Hope,” or in numerous Iconocast podcasts, denouncing responses to the financial crisis in Christian anarchist blogs and newspapers, or turning some classic submissive passages from the King James translation of the Bible into an empowering call to “occupy the land” and “cast wickedness into the furnace of fire,” contemporary Christian anarchists do spend much time denouncing the current economic order.<sup>54</sup> To date, however, Christian criticisms of capitalism rooted directly in exegesis tend to be less ubiquitous and less developed than those of the state or church.

In any case, anarchist interpretations of religious scripture are not restricted to Christianity. In Islam, for instance, both Mohamed Jean Veneuse’s “Anarca-Islam” and Abdennur Prado’s *El Islam como Anarquismo Místico* demonstrate that the Koran can be interpreted anarchically as an anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal text—indeed, also (just as the Christian gospel)

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54 J. Barr, “Radical Hope: Anarchy, Christianity, and the Prophetic Imagination,” 2008, <http://propheticheretic.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/radical-hope-anarchy-christianity-and-the-prophetic-imagination.pdf>; Iconocast Collective, “The Iconocast Podcast,” *Jesus Radicals*, 2013, <http://www.jesusradicals.com/category/iconocast/>; D. Nemo, “Mistranslation and Interpretation in the Service of Empire,” 2012, <http://vimeo.com/50409919>.

as a text critical of the religious establishment.<sup>55</sup> These studies, however, seem to be the first detailed attempts at such exegesis so far (at least in English). Outside monotheistic traditions, John Clark's "Master Lao and the Anarchist Prince" aims to show that "the Daodejing is in accord with [...] holistic ecological anarchism,"<sup>56</sup> and in *Zen Anarchy* Max Cafard (Clark's alter-ego) similarly argues that Zen was always meant to be anarchic, indeed that it *is* "the practice of anarchy," and demonstrates this through an interpretation of respected Zen and Buddhist writings and teachings.<sup>57</sup>

In short, there are numerous examples of interpretations of scripture that lead to anarchist conclusions. These examples do of course illustrate the paradox of anarchism *derived from scriptural authority*. Even if the conclusion is an anarchist critique of the state, the economy or even of religion, secular anarchists may still justifiably denounce the "revealed" point of departure as not very anarchist. Yet that is also the strength of that position. Within contemporary *religious* circles, appeal to scriptural authority can act as a theological trump card, and religious anarchists have sometimes used it in precisely this way. When a holy text can be convincingly and consistently argued to imply an anarchist position, this can help persuade coreligionists. Anarchist exegesis therefore provides an essential line of reasoning for religious anarchist arguments.

### Anarchist Theology

"Theology" is a term that can be misunderstood in non-religious circles, and sometimes the word "theological" gets used almost as a synonym for "religious." Yet theology refers to a specific mode of inquiry and understanding, one that is more deeply rooted in religion than "religious studies." It follows a style of argument which is more contemplative, which often assumes "belief," and which thinks within (and uses the language of) religious traditions. Compared to exegesis, therefore, theology is less concerned with scripture and its interpretation, and more with approaching specific questions and themes (such as war, evil, peace, justice, love) from a particular religious or cosmological

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55 M.J. Veneuse, "Anarca-Islam," *The Anarchist Library*, 2009, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mohamed-jean-veneuse-anarca-islam>; A. Prado, *El Islam como Anarquismo Místico* (Barcelona: Virus, 2010).

56 J. Clark, "Master Lao and the Anarchist Prince," n.d., [http://anarvist.freeshell.org/JohnClark/MASTERLAOANDTHE\\_ANARCHIST\\_PRINCE\\_by\\_John\\_Clark.html](http://anarvist.freeshell.org/JohnClark/MASTERLAOANDTHE_ANARCHIST_PRINCE_by_John_Clark.html).

57 M. Cafard, "Zen Anarchy," *RA Forum*, 2013, <http://raforum.info/spip.php?article3503>.

understanding. Theology ultimately seeks to remain faithful to scripture, but not reduced to it.

There is some debate within religious studies as to whether the term “theology” should be applied only to Christian or at least monotheistic thought, or whether it can be used to describe the similar thinking and philosophy which can emerge from any religious tradition. Yet even though some religions have no deity (“*theos*”) to “reason” (“*logos*”) about, Christianity is not the only religion to engage in the mode of reflection rooted within a religious tradition which is described by the term: “theology.” Hence, although somewhat ethnocentric, the word does name a type of investigation which is not necessarily restricted to Christian thought. Therefore, the label of “anarchist theology” can similarly be applied to anarchist reflections rooted in any religious tradition, thus helping differentiate such mode of thinking from a more exegetical one focused on interpreting foundational texts.

At the same time, the boundary between exegesis and theology is not a rigid one. Theological discussions are not necessarily directly and hurriedly rooted in scripture, but many ultimately are. Exegetical discussions can be quite narrowly focused on the specific verses they seek to interpret, but frequently evoke theological ideas and debates which have matured within their religious tradition. In short, “exegesis” and “theology” point to two types of analyses which are driven by different primary concerns, but are nonetheless complementary and often used together. For instance, Christian anarchists have contributed to theological discussions on restorative justice (theology), and they have articulated a detailed interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount (exegesis), but they have also criticized mainstream theological developments such as just war theory on the basis of scripture (both).

However, not all Christian anarchism is merely about scripture, and several Christian anarchists have been articulating considerations of specific contemporary questions. Clairborne and Haw’s *Jesus for President* and Ted Lewis’ *Electing Not to Vote* both address the themes of elections and voting;<sup>58</sup> Ellul’s *Violence* ponders the topic of violence from a variety of Christian perspectives;<sup>59</sup> Keith Hebden’s *Seeking Justice* blends personal experience and theology, and more broadly stories and theory, to explore ways

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58 T. Lewis, ed., *Electing Not to Vote: Christian Reflections on Reasons for not Voting* (Eugene, Ore: Cascade Books, 2008).

59 J. Ellul, *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective*, trans. C. Gaul Kings (London: SCM, 1970).



in which activists can be inspired to challenge unjust structures today;<sup>60</sup> and Ronald Osborn's collection of essays reflects from a radical perspective influenced by Tolstoy and Chomsky on a number of topics related to war and political power including Obama's Nobel Prize, the political contribution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Vietnam War.<sup>61</sup> These publications all seek to address specific themes and debates grounded within an anarchist-leaning Christian tradition.

Such theological discussions often engage with and find support in existing theological schools of thought which, although not reaching explicitly anarchist conclusions, have developed arguments which are sympathetic to it. For instance, much "theology of liberation" considers themes close to anarchism. Its critique of oppression and of the capitalist economy and its preference for grassroots and community-based forms of organization, for instance, chime with anarchism. Given liberation theology's indebtedness to socialist thought, this is probably not surprising. Rarely, however, is anarchism explicitly mentioned in liberation theology, and rarely is a specific criticism of the state expressed in arguments more familiar to anarchists. Indeed, empowerment of the oppressed is often envisaged in statist terms. Yet just as anarchism is ideologically close to (indeed arguably a stream of) socialism, anarchist theology is not far removed from liberation theology. Linda Damico's *The Anarchist Dimension of Liberation Theology* explores precisely this ideological proximity,<sup>62</sup> and Keith Hebden's *Dalit Theology and Christian Anarchism* illustrates this proximity in the particular postcolonial Indian context of Dalit theology.<sup>63</sup>

Similar arguments can be made of pacifist theology. One of the main reasons some Christian anarchists (Tolstoyans in particular) are anarchists is that they apply their pacifist rejection of violence to the state—they see their anarchism as a consistent and essential extension of their pacifism. Conversely and as already noted in passing, some Christian anarchists have found support in arguments made by leading theologians such as Yoder or Hauerwas who, although not anarchists, have articulated powerful theological cases against violence.

A more recent school of theological thought which at times echoes anarchist themes is Radical Orthodoxy, in particular in some of the writings of

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60 K. Hebden, *Seeking Justice: The Radical Compassion of Jesus* (Alresford, U.K.: Circle Books, 2013).

61 R.E. Osborn, *Anarchy and Apocalypse: Essays on Faith, Violence, and Theodicy* (Eugene, Ore: Cascade, 2010).

62 L.H. Damico, *The Anarchist Dimension of Liberation Theology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987).

63 K. Hebden, *Dalit Theology and Christian Anarchism* (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2011).

William T. Cavanaugh.<sup>64</sup> This theological current aims to return to and affirm “orthodox” interpretations of Christian faith such that, implicitly or explicitly, it is critical of contemporary ideas and institutions such as secularism but also of the modern sovereign nation-state established by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Even if its main concern is not necessarily with politics and even if its critical engagement with much secular thought brings it into direct philosophical conflict with much anarchist thinking, when some of its scholars engage with political questions, it can find itself close to an anarchist position. Richard Davis recently completed a doctoral thesis precisely on Cavanaugh and Milbank (possibly the most notorious theologian in this school) which discusses their critique of the state on theological grounds, using the language of creation, preservation and redemption to examine the origins of the state and present the church (in the “radical orthodox” sense) as an alternative to it.<sup>65</sup> Most secular anarchists will presumably reject the grounding in theology as well as the critique of secularism, but Radical Orthodoxy nonetheless presents an example of theology which leans towards anarchism in its critique of the state.

At the same time, even when the state or capitalism are criticized theologically, rarely do theologians openly adopt the “anarchism” label. This reluctance might be driven by a degree of caution and distrust based on the perception that anarchists inexorably dismiss all things religious, or perhaps sometimes to avoid lengthy justifications of the appropriateness of the label. But this seems to be changing. In both activist and scholarly circles, there is a palpable buzz around religious (especially Christian) anarchism, and in religious groups in particular an apparent desire to articulate and discuss it *theologically*. Whether in current research projects, online discussion fora, recent publications or conference papers, there is perceptible enthusiasm for more explicitly anarchist-leaning theology.

One example is the quality of theological discussions hosted on websites such as Jesus Radicals, whether in essays and podcasts,<sup>66</sup> at conferences

64 W.T. Cavanaugh, “A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State,” *Modern Theology* 11 (1995): 397–420; W.T. Cavanaugh, “The City: Beyond Secular Parodies,” in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. J. Milbank, et al. (London: Routledge, 1999), 182–200; W.T. Cavanaugh, “Killing for the Telephone Company: Why the Nation-State is not the Keeper of the Common Good,” *Modern Theology* 20 (2004): 243–274.

65 R. Davis, “The Political Church and the Profane State in John Milbank and William Cavanaugh” (D.Phil diss., University of Edinburgh, 2013).

66 Jesus Radicals’ “Iconocast” podcast, for example, includes interviews with a substantial list of American theologians.

convened through it, or in publications emerging from these.<sup>67</sup> Also interesting and indicative of the up-to-date appeal of anarchist theology is Kevin Snyman's *Occupying Faith*, which is a collection of sermons, reflections, and other resources placing Jesus among the Occupy movement and exploring how Christians can respond "through prayer, meditation, liturgy, stories, art, reflection and theological debate" to today's "unjust economic and political systems."<sup>68</sup> Mohamed Jean Veneuse's ambitions for "Anarca Islam" is similarly rooted in the contemporary political economy and blends exegesis with more theological considerations.

In any case, anarchist theology is not entirely new. As already noted, several established schools of theological thought have hovered close to anarchist conclusions. Hundreds of articles printed in the Catholic Worker newspaper since its launch (in 1933) have echoed central anarchist themes using theological language. Moreover, most of the books mentioned above as "exegetical" also at times engage in more "theological" reflection and arguments, as do their authors in other publications. For instance, Ellul, Boyd, Wink, Yoder and Andrews, to name but a few, have published theological works which lend themselves well to Christian anarchist arguments. As to Gary Snyder's "Buddhist Anarchism," it also probably best comes under the category of "theology" rather than "exegesis" in that it articulates anarchist reflections from a Buddhist position.<sup>69</sup> What examples such as these illustrate, therefore, is that the recent burst of scholarship on anarchist theology has older foundations to build upon.

A more controversial set of theological publications might perhaps be qualified as "polemics," "tracts," or "pleas" (an analogous French term might be *plaidoyer*). For instance, Jacques de Guillebon and Falk van Gaver's *L'Anarchisme chrétien* blends an avowedly selective reading of renowned French Catholic theologians with meandering discussions of anarchist themes and expected figures such as Tolstoy, Ellul and Day, thus painting a deliberately controversial yet rich and stimulating canvas.<sup>70</sup> Another example might be Paul Cudenec's *The Anarchist Soul*, which journeys through the anarchism of Bakunin, Landauer and Read, but also through esoteric forms of religion, psychology and existential philosophy to present anarchism as a complete way of being

67 For example, Van Steenwyk's *That Holy Anarchist*.

68 K. Snyman, *Occupying Faith: Resources for Worship, Meditation, Reflection and Study*, 2013, <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/290593>.

69 G. Snyder, "Buddhist Anarchism" [1969], *Bureau of Public Secrets*, <http://bopsecrets.org/CF/garysnyder.htm>.

70 J. de Guillebon and F. van Gaver, *L'Anarchisme Chrétien* (Paris: L'Oeuvre, 2012).

in contrast to the alienating life of modern society.<sup>71</sup> One could also mention Kerry Thornley's *Zenarchy*: unorthodox in its structure, provocative in its arguments, typical of its author, it describes itself as "a way of Zen applied to social life," a "non-combative, non-participatory, no-politics approach to anarchy intended to get the serious student thinking." Such publications may not follow traditional or academic lines of argument, but they do offer thought-provoking contributions to anarchist theology.<sup>72</sup>

Lastly, the recent work of Simon Critchley ought to be mentioned here because it engages with theology even though it is not "theological" in the sense of speaking from within a theological tradition. Both his "Mystical Anarchism" and his *Faith of the Faithless* journey through Schmitt's political theology, Rousseau's civil religion, and medieval mysticism and millenarianism in order to reflect on the mystical, anarchist, and arguably millenarian potential for love of fellow humans to transform both the self and our understanding of the common.<sup>73</sup> Critchley is not speaking from a Christian context, but his work is "theological" in the sense that it contributes to what Schmitt understood as "political theology" (which sees political discourses and institutions as secularized theological ones), and it discusses the theological work of medieval mystics and millenarians. Ted Troxell's "Christian Theory" arguably adds to Critchley (and to the view that all politics is in some ultimate sense "theological") by bringing into careful dialogue a number of post-anarchist themes with theological reflections articulated by John Howard Yoder, thus presenting Yoder as a potential contributor to post-anarchist theory.<sup>74</sup>

In short, anarchist theology refers to diverse modes of analysis which are relatively distinct from anarchist exegesis, although complementary. As anarchist exegesis is gaining increasing recognition, so, too, is anarchist theology. Several schools of theological thought have come close to anarchist territory in the past, but rarely have theological discussions explicitly embraced anarchist reasoning and conclusions. More recently, however, a number of scholars and activists have been developing theological reflections that are sympathetic to

71 P. Cudenec, *The Anarchist Revelation: Being What We're Meant To Be* (Sussex, U.K.: Winter Oak Press, 2013).

72 K. Thornley, "Zenarchy" [1997], *Impropaganda*, <http://www.impropaganda.net/1997/zenarchy.html>.

73 S. Critchley, "Mystical Anarchism," *Critical Horizons* 10 (2009): 272–306; S. Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless: Experiments in Political Theology* (London: Verso, 2012).

74 T. Troxell, "Christian Theory: Postanarchism, Theology, and John Howard Yoder," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 7 (2013): 37–60.

and driven towards anarchist themes and arguments, so it seems likely that anarchist theology will continue to bear a variety of fruits in the coming years.

### Religious Anarchist History

A third and more loosely defined type of scholarship in which anarchism and religion encounter each other presents and analyzes the thought and biography of specific thinkers and movements. This type of scholarship varies between the more biographical and the more discursive, some studies concentrating on mapping the lives and genealogies of individuals or movements and others more concerned with reflecting on or discussing their ideas and philosophies, perhaps drawing parallels and charting currents across different historical contexts. What is common to such studies despite significant variety is their concern to present (indeed often recover and affirm) the life and thought of religious anarchist figures—who did what when, how this was religious and anarchist, and why it matters for the broader histories of those contexts. Examples of such studies abound, and include: studies of Tolstoyan colonies;<sup>75</sup> Charlotte Alston's monograph on Tolstoyism as an international movement;<sup>76</sup> Valerio Pignatta's (Italian) book on sixteenth-century English religious revolutionaries;<sup>77</sup> Bojan Aleksov's history of religious dissenters in early twentieth century Hungary;<sup>78</sup> André de Raaij's account of Dutch Christian anarchists in the same period;<sup>79</sup> Harold Barclay's short book describing various religious sects and his earlier article centered more narrowly on Muslim communities;<sup>80</sup> Patricia Crone's presentation of ninth-century

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75 See, for example, W.H.G. Armytage, "J.C. Kenworthy and the Tolstoyan Communities in England," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 16 (1957): 391–404; M.J. De K. Holman, "The Purleigh Colony: Tolstoyan Togetherness in the Late 1890s," in *New Essays on Tolstoy*, ed. M. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 194–222.

76 C. Alston, *Tolstoy and His Disciples: The History of a Radical International Movement* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

77 V. Pignatta, *Dio L'Anarchico: Movimenti rivoluzionari religiosi nell'Inghilterra del Seicento* (Milan: Arcipelago Edizioni, 1997).

78 B. Aleksov, "Religious Dissenters and Anarchists in Turn of the Century Hungary," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 47–68.

79 A. de Raaij, "A Dead Seed Bearing Much Fruit: The Dutch Christian Anarchist Movement of the International Fraternity," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 69–81.

80 H. Barclay, *Religious Movements: Today and Yesterday* (London: Freedom Press, 2011); H. Barclay, "Islam, Muslim Societies and Anarchy," *Anarchist Studies* 10 (2002): 105–118.

Muslim anarchists;<sup>81</sup> Anthony Fiscella's panoramas of Islamic anarchist individuals and movements;<sup>82</sup> Tripp York's biographies of Dorothy Day, Clarence Jordan and the Berrigan brothers;<sup>83</sup> the several studies chronicling the lives of Catholic Worker individuals and communities,<sup>84</sup> as well as, of course, the autobiographical publications of some of those individuals;<sup>85</sup> John Clark's overview of anarchist-leaning and "nature-affirming spiritualities" including Daoism, Buddhism, Zen and many more;<sup>86</sup> John Rapp's accounts of the anarchist impulse in the Dao De Jing, in Daoist philosophers and poets, and in more recent Chinese figures;<sup>87</sup> and Michael T. Van Dyke's chapter on Kenneth Rexroth's Zen and anarchist leanings and on the post-war spiritual counter-culture in San Francisco.<sup>88</sup>

One could also mention Jesse Cohn's presentation of Jewish anarchists;<sup>89</sup> studies of Jewish anarchists prior to the First World War in the United States,

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- 81 P. Crone, "Ninth-Century Muslim Anarchists," *Past and Present* 167 (2000): 3–28.
- 82 A.T. Fiscella, "Imagining an Islamic Anarchism: A New Field of Study Is Ploughed," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 280–317; A.T. Fiscella, "Varieties of Islamic Anarchism: A Brief Introduction," 2012, <http://www.ru-a.org/2012/03/varieties-of-islamic-anarchism-zine.html>.
- 83 T. York, *Living on Hope While Living in Babylon: The Christian Anarchists of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2009).
- 84 See, for example, M.C. Segers, "Equality and Christian Anarchism: The Political and Social Ideas of the Catholic Worker Movement," *Review of Politics* 40 (1978): 196–230; P.G. Coy, ed., *A Revolution of the Heart: Essays on the Catholic Worker* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); L. Holben, *All the Way to Heaven: A Theological Reflection on Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and the Catholic Worker* (Eugene, Ore: Wipf and Stock, 2010); M.H. Ellis, *Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century* (Eugene, Ore: Wipf and Stock, 2003); M. and L. Zwick, *The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2005).
- 85 See, for example, D. Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of the Legendary Catholic Social Activist* (New York: Harper, 1952); A. Hennacy, *The Book of Ammon* (Baltimore, Md.: Fortkamp Press 1994); C. O'Reilly, *Remembering Forgetting: A Journey of Non-Violent Resistance to the War in East Timor* (Sydney: Otford Press, 2001).
- 86 J. Clark, "Anarchism," 49.
- 87 J.A. Rapp, "Daoism and Anarchism Reconsidered," *Anarchist Studies* 6 (1998): 123–152; J.A. Rapp, "Anarchism or Nihilism: the Buddhist-influenced Thought of Wu Nengzi," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 202–225; J.A. Rapp, *Daoism and Anarchism: Critiques of State Autonomy in Ancient and Modern China* (London: Continuum, 2012).
- 88 M.T. Van Dyke, "Kenneth Rexroth's Integrative Vision: Anarchism, Poetry, and the Religious Experience in Post-World War II San Francisco," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 226–248.
- 89 J. Cohn, "Messianic Troublemakers: The Past and Present of Jewish Anarchism," *Zeek*, n.d., [http://www.zeek.net/politics\\_0504.shtml](http://www.zeek.net/politics_0504.shtml).

Central Europe, and London;<sup>90</sup> Amedeo Bertolo's edited volume bringing together the proceedings of a conference on anarchism and Jews;<sup>91</sup> research on the role of Judaism on the radicalism of anarchists such as Emma Goldman;<sup>92</sup> as well as works by and about thinkers such as Martin Buber and Gustav Landauer, for instance. However, one difficulty here is that "Jewish" is a label that is as cultural and ethnic as it is "religious," and—apart perhaps from Buber—it is not always very clear how far Jewish anarchists are anarchists based on specifically *religious* arguments.

There are therefore clearly many examples of publications that have narrated and reinstated the histories of religious anarchist movements and activists. These studies are rarely *only* descriptive and biographical, but they do perform an important role in writing or rewriting oft-neglected religious anarchists back into their historical contexts, in presenting some of their original contributions and telling the story of their political and religious impact. They paint a rich tapestry of religious anarchist practice (and thought) across time and space, thus empowering contemporary practice (and thought) with historical perspective.

In addition to those publications, Tolstoy and Ellul are two particular Christian anarchist authors who have enjoyed significant attention over the years, with many publications providing relatively integrated studies of both their thought and biography. Predictably, given his notoriety as a great writer of fiction, countless biographies and analyses of Tolstoy have been published in many languages. However, the specifically anarchist aspects of his later thought are rarely explicitly engaged with. Numerous studies discuss his unconventional religious views, but his political ones tend to be more quickly dismissed as too eccentric, or only described in passing or in rather vague terms. This applies as much to the scholarship on Tolstoy as to the many news articles, documentaries, and other publications which commemorated the centenary of his death in 2010. Still, a few studies have nonetheless directly engaged with both his religious and his anarchist thought. Alexandre Christoyannopoulos

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90 F. Biagini, *Nati Altrove: Il movimento anarchico ebraico tra Mosca e New York* (Pisa: Biblioteca F. Serantini, 1998); M. Löwy, *Rédemption et Utopie: Le judaïsme libertaire en Europe centrale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988); W.J. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875–1914* (Nottingham, U.K.: Five Leaves Publishing, 2004).

91 A. Bertolo, ed., *L'anarchico e l'Ebreo: storia di un incontro* (Milan: Elèuthera, 2001).

92 V. Gornick, *Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013).

listed several of these in an *Anarchist Studies* article,<sup>93</sup> and a few others have been published since. Colm McKeogh's *Tolstoy's Pacifism*, for instance, is one notable recent study which presents Tolstoy's religious and political ideas, including his anarchist thought, in significant depth.<sup>94</sup> Rosamund Bartlett's recent biography also gives some space to Tolstoy's anarchism as well as his take on religion.<sup>95</sup> By and large, however, the vast scholarship on Tolstoy tends to focus on other aspects of his writings than his anarchist thought, or if it does touch on the latter it does so in vague and frequently dismissive terms.

Jacques Ellul is the other particularly notable Christian anarchist whose thought has been the subject of a number of scholarly publications. One recent example is an issue of the *Ellul Forum*, which includes four essays devoted to taking seriously the anarchist dimension of his thought.<sup>96</sup> In general, however, as with Tolstoy, the anarchist elements of Ellul's thought are rarely engaged with in much detail. Indeed, Frédéric Rognon's *Généralisations Ellul*,<sup>97</sup> which lists and briefly describes the various "successors" of Ellul's thought today, only includes three "anarchists," even though his *Jacques Ellul* does include some discussion of Ellul's anarchist thought and its relevance for contemporary ecological and global justice movements.<sup>98</sup> Of the biographies of Ellul, however, Andrew Goddard's is perhaps the one which analyzes Ellul's religious and anarchist thought in most detail.<sup>99</sup> Still, most of the scholarship on Ellul's social and political work tends to engage with his analysis of the technological society more than with his (admittedly less abundant) explicitly anarchist musings.

In terms of historical figures and their thought, there are also well-known thinkers who are not usually identified as religious anarchists, but whose thought, some have argued, is closer to anarchism than typically acknowledged. For instance: Peter Marshall presents William Blake as a forerunner of modern anarchism;<sup>100</sup> Christopher Hobson examines Blake's perception of

93 A. Christoyannopoulos, "Leo Tolstoy on the State: A Detailed Picture of Tolstoy's Denunciation of State Violence and Deception," *Anarchist Studies* 16 (2008): 20–47.

94 C. McKeogh, *Tolstoy's Pacifism* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2009).

95 R. Bartlett, *Tolstoy: A Russian Life* (London: Profile Books, 2010).

96 A. Alexis-Baker, ed., *Anarchism and Jacques Ellul* (South Hamilton, Mass.: The International Jacques Ellul Society, 2011).

97 F. Rognon, *Généralisations Ellul: soixante héritiers de la pensée de Jacques Ellul* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2012).

98 F. Rognon, *Jacques Ellul: une pensée en dialogue* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007).

99 A. Goddard, *Living the Word, Resisting the World: The Life and Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 2002).

100 P. Marshall, *William Blake: Visionary Anarchist* (London: Freedom Press, 1994).



Jesus and how it informs his anarchist-leaning politics;<sup>101</sup> Mitchell Verter discusses Emmanuel Levinas' use of the term *anarchy* and the extent to which his thought resonates with that of classical anarchists;<sup>102</sup> and Richard Davis argues that Søren Kierkegaard's call for indifference to the state makes him a peculiarly Christian type of anarchist.<sup>103</sup>

As to histories of much more recent examples, we are not aware of any scholarship aiming to comprehensively map out today's religious anarchists. The religious anarchist community, however, still appears to be thriving. Religious anarchism seems particularly vibrant in North America, but significant communities are perceptible in the British Isles, Australia and the South Pacific, as well as in continental Europe and beyond. Websites such as Jesus Radicals provide a hub and a source of information for religious anarchist networks, as do of course social media, online fora and other online tools and campaigns such as Occupy Faith. Offline, these networks organize conferences and other gatherings, and religious anarchism is practiced daily in communal living, in providing care and support for the victims of the global political economy, and in "liturgy" and agitation against the powers and for a more just global society. For many, one important aim is to affirm, through practice, alternative traditions which are more faithful to scripture or to the origins of their particular religion, and in so doing to engage mainstream coreligionists as well as anarchist comrades and the broader citizenry. In any case and despite their similarities, today's religious anarchists are rooted in a variety of religious traditions and political contexts, and it will be a task for future scholarship to tell the history of their life and thought.

## Conclusions

While this survey is not comprehensive, we have attempted to show the variety of ways in which anarchism and religion engage with each other. Anarchists have articulated a number of criticisms of religion, including atheist dismissals of religion; but not all anarchism is atheist or takes a negative approach to religion. Critical anarchist questioning, *including* by religious anarchists, of dogmatic claims and oppressive institutions continues, but religion is not the only target, nor is "religion" necessarily the main or only problem.

101 C.Z. Hobson, "Anarchism and William Blake's Idea of Jesus," *The Utopian* 1 (2000): 43–58.

102 M. Verter, "The Anarchism of the Other Person," in Jun and Wahl, *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, 67–84.

103 R. Davis, "Love, Hate, and Kierkegaard's Christian Politics of Indifference," in Christoyannopoulos, *Religious Anarchism*, 82–105.

Anarchist exegesis is a slightly different mode of analysis than anarchist theology. It is one thing to study and try to interpret faithfully the founding texts of a religious tradition, and another to ponder specific contemporary challenges and phenomena from within the language of a religious understanding (and without necessarily even having clear scriptural guidance to refer back to). As the more historical studies introduced in the fourth section show, the reading of founding religious texts has encouraged anarchist tendencies across the centuries, and the scholarship covered in the second section underpins such interpretations. The more intellectually innovative and challenging scholarship, however, is probably in anarchist theology, where sincere reflections and musings about various questions confronting the world are articulated in ways that seek to resonate within the authors' religious traditions.

The impact of "anarchism" in religious studies is therefore varied: sometimes anarchism criticizes religion; sometimes parallels are noted between anarchist and religious ideas and practices; sometimes scriptural interpretations lead to anarchist conclusions; sometimes theologians lean towards anarchist themes in their religious debates; sometimes historical individuals and movements are studied and reinstated; and meanwhile, many religious anarchists try to live out their religious anarchism. The intersection of anarchism and religion has been a very vibrant area of study in recent years, with much interest not only from academics, but also anarchists and religious people in the wider community. Yet many avenues of research remain ripe for original explorations, not least in religions other than Christianity.

In a global arena witnessing what some scholars have described as a "resurgence" of religion, anarchist encounters with religion are not likely to become rarer. In that context, the emergence of religious anarchism radicalizes religion and thus empowers religious people to join anarchist ranks, builds bridges with fellow travelers confronting similar anarchist struggle, and with a good balance of respect and critical enquiry can enrich both anarchism and religious studies with a better understanding of anarchism, religion and religious anarchism.

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## Anarchism and Pacifism

*Andrew Fiala*

### Introduction

While anarchism is often portrayed in popular media as a form of bomb-throwing or window-breaking militancy, violence is *not* an essential feature of anarchism. Indeed, the connections between anarchism and pacifism run deep, even though there is no necessary connection between the anarchist's political agenda and the pacifist's ethical commitments. Anarchism is understood primarily as a political position, articulated as a possible goal within political philosophy and discourses of political justification. Pacifism is usually understood as a moral position that rejects the use of violence.

Although it is possible to imagine personal anarchism or literary/artistic anarchism, in most cases anarchists are committed to a political end. One way of articulating this is to locate anarchism on the continuum imagined by Plato and Aristotle in their logic of the types of states.<sup>1</sup> In monarchy, one person rules; in oligarchy and aristocracy, some rule; in democracy, all rule; and in anarchy, no one rules. Some may suggest that genuine democracy and anarchy are closely related: the rule of all may be closely related to the rule of none. Thus democratic unanimity and the anarchist's ideal of voluntary association are closely related. At any rate, we should notice immediately that anarchism is focused on the structure of political reality and the justification of states.

Pacifism may have political implications, but ultimately it is a moral standpoint with regard to the means to be employed in action (whether political action or individual action). Pacifists hold, to one degree or another, that non-violent action is right and violent action is wrong. Much needs to be said about the nature of violence and nonviolence. There are deep questions, for example, about whether embargoes and strikes are really nonviolent. Pacifists also need to consider whether nonlethal violence is acceptable or whether some forms

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<sup>1</sup> See F. Dupuis-Déri, "Anarchism as Political Philosophy," in *New Perspectives on Anarchism*, eds. N. Jun and S. Wahl (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010), 9–24; and A. Fiala, *Against Religion, States, and Wars* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013).

of killing or letting die are appropriate in extreme emergencies. Such questions are focused on the morality of action (or non-action in the case of “letting die”) and these moral questions should be distinguished from the discussion of political structures and ends that is the focus of anarchism.

In short, anarchism is focused on the question of political ends and justification, while pacifism is focused on questions about the morality of means. The fact that anarchism and pacifism focus on different spheres of concern makes it clear that there is no necessary connection between them. One could pursue the political end of anarchism employing either violent or nonviolent means. And one could assert the moral primacy of nonviolent means, while remaining agnostic about political structures and theories. However, in some cases pacifism and anarchism do overlap and coincide. For example, those who hold that the central complaint to be made against states is that they are essentially violent and that state-violence (in war, in police brutality, in prisons, etc.) is wrong will reach anarcho-pacifist conclusions. Such conclusions are merely one possibility in a broad continuum that can include at its extremes both state-centric pacifism and militant anarchism. We will examine the relation between anarchism and pacifism in a more systematic fashion in what follows. First, we will discuss historical points of connection between anarchism and pacifism. Then we will examine the varieties of pacifism and anarchism. Finally, we will consider a familiar objection to pacifist-anarchism and reply to that objection.

### Historical Background

Quite a few thinkers have suggested that pacifism and anarchism coincide: that the moral obligation to avoid violence overlaps with the political goal of abolishing the state. The historical linkage of these ideas can be traced through the work of Leo Tolstoy and the New England transcendentalists (Adin Ballou, Bronson Alcott, and William Lloyd Garrison) who inspired him. Since Tolstoy’s reputation as both anarchist and pacifist is well-known, let’s begin with him. Tolstoy explained, to cite one example:

The abolition of the organization of Government formed to do violence, does not at all involve the abolition of what is reasonable and good, and therefore not based on violence, in laws or law courts, or in property, or in police regulations, or in financial arrangements, or in popular education. On the contrary, the absence of the brutal power of Government,

which is needed only for its own support, will facilitate a juster and more reasonable social organization, needing no violence.<sup>2</sup>

Tolstoy's anarchism is clearly associated with his rejection of violence: he is opposed to government *because* government employs violence. He thinks that the elimination of violent government will help to bring about a diminution of violence in the world.

Tolstoy's ideas developed from his reading of the Christian gospels. But his thinking on these matters was not original. Before him the New England transcendentalists were exploring similar ideas. Adin Ballou provided an explanation of the connection between the rejection of violence and a critique of government in his 1846 book *Christian Non-Resistance*. Ballou explained that Jesus rejected both violence and government. Ballou wrote:

There is a spirit that animates and characterizes carnal human government. It is the destroying spirit—the angel of injury, the old serpent of violence ... He is accounted a fool who supposes there can be any such thing as government among mankind without it. Consequently its solemn acknowledgment is now, as ever, the condition on which men must take the scepter, or assume the seals of office. He who would rule, must first worship this genius of violence—must swear to support his authority with sword and penal vengeance.<sup>3</sup>

Ballou and his transcendentalist colleagues attempted to put their pacifist-anarchism into practice by withdrawing to a (short-lived) separatist commune. However, this is an indication of the difficulty of the conjunction of pacifism and anarchism: it is difficult to conjoin these two ideals in the real world of violent states.

Prior to Tolstoy and the New England transcendentalists, Mennonites, Quakers, and other Anabaptists offered interpretations of Christianity that point in the direction of both anarchism and pacifism. Behind this Christian idealism is an attempt to get back to the heart of original Christianity. The Christian anarcho-pacifists located their chief inspiration in the apparent anarchism and pacifism of Jesus himself. Jesus said, to note one important passage, that we should love our enemies (Luke 6:27; Matthew 5:44). This

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2 Leo Tolstoy, "Patriotism and Government" [1900], in *Essays and Letters*, trans. A. Maude (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1904), 258.

3 A. Ballou, *Christian Non-Resistance* (1846; reprint, Philadelphia: Universal Peace Union, 1910), 22–23.

commandment seems to point toward pacifism, while also undermining the logic of states. States are organized, as Carl Schmitt famously explained, in order to distinguish between friends and enemies. But if we are commanded to love our enemies, then the *raison d'être* of the state collapses. Notice how means and ends coincide here. Jesus commands love as both a means and an end in itself. The interpretation of these sorts of passages preferred by Tolstoy, Ballou, and other non-Augustinian Christians holds that Jesus fundamentally intends both pacifism and anarchism. As Tolstoy concluded, “true Christian doctrine, making of the law of love a rule without exceptions, in the same way abolishes the possibility of any violence, and cannot, in consequence, help but condemn every state founded on violence.”<sup>4</sup>

There is no *necessary* connection between Christianity, pacifism, and anarchism. Biblical passages may be interpreted in ways that support violence and political hierarchy. Indeed, many Christians—perhaps most Christians—remain committed to ideas about just wars and justified violence. And many (perhaps most) Christians remain committed to the idea that states are necessary to establish political order and social justice, which are requirements of Christian ethics. Augustinian Christianity is well-known for supporting both political hierarchy and justified warfare—in the name of establishing *tranquillitas ordinis*—the peace of order or well-ordered concord. Christian love could require violence (say, in fighting to defend your loved ones). Love of enemies could also lead to state power (say, in creating prisons and schools to educate, reform, and rehabilitate our enemies).

Even self-described Christian anarchists are not necessarily pacifists. Vernard Eller, for example, is a Christian anarchist who rejects absolute pacifism—even though this rejection still sides for the most part with peace, nonviolence, and nonresistance. Eller explains that pacifism too easily becomes an “-arky” which rules thought and action. As a Christian, Eller is committed to the theological ideal of peace; but he maintains that the world of secular politics remains at odds with Christian theology.<sup>5</sup> Eller claims to be influenced by Jacques Ellul in this regard, but Ellul reaches a somewhat different conclusion.

Ellul is perhaps the most influential contemporary Christian anarchist. He clearly states a connection between anarchism and pacifism at the outset of his book *Anarchy and Christianity*: “By anarchy I mean first an absolute

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4 Leo Tolstoy, *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence*, trans. M. Koutouzow (New York: Dover, 2012), 37.

5 V. Eller, *Christian Anarchy: Jesus' Primacy Over the Powers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987).

rejection of violence.”<sup>6</sup> He explains that love is the way for a Christian, not violence.<sup>7</sup> He explicitly aligns himself with “pacifist, antinationalist, anticapitalist, moral, and antidemocratic anarchism (e.g., which is hostile to the falsified democracy of bourgeois states).”<sup>8</sup> Ellul explains that violence begets more violence, while recognizing that states have a monopoly on violence. Quoting Revelation, he explains that states that use the sword will die by the sword. He also claims that the same is true for anarchists who would raise their swords against the state: “Do not fight the state with the sword, for if you do, you will be killed by the sword.”<sup>9</sup> All of this is framed, however, with a recognition that for the Christian there is another kingdom and another source of obedience: the political realm is superseded by the kingdom of God. It might be that the conjunction of pacifism and anarchism makes the best sense from a religious perspective such as this that points entirely beyond the world of states and violence.

There is more to be said about the relation between Christianity, anarchism, and pacifism. But let’s conclude this historical excursus by considering some other historical connections. A different lineage would look to those ancient Greek philosophers who were interested in finding a form of inner peace (or *ataraxia*) by forming local associations and friends—and by withdrawing from political squabbling. The Epicureans and Cynics of the ancient world did not imagine another world in which lion and lamb would lie down together in the City of God. Instead, they withdrew from political life and lived in peace in separation from the hierarchies and violence of the political world. Epicureans recommended retreat into the private sphere (the famous Epicurean “garden”), while the Cynics were even more radical in rejecting the trappings of political society and living at odds with the polis.

Other ancient traditions in Asia share anarchist and pacifist sympathies. Of course, one must simplify things quite a bit here—since the world’s traditions are internally complex. But Taoism and Buddhism generally advocate nonviolence and are also critical of state formations. *Chuang-Tzu* contains, for example, an interesting critique of states that emphasizes “letting be” or “leaving things alone” or “leaving the world open” (as *Zai You*, the title of Chapter 11 of *Chuang-Tzu* has been variously translated). *Chuang-Tzu* suggests that governments go wrong by trying to govern, when in fact actionless-action

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6 J. Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 11.

7 *Ibid.*, 13.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*, 65.

is the best course of action (or non-action, as it were). This points toward both pacifism and anarchism: the Taoist goal appears to be simply to leave things alone, avoid interfering, manipulating, and attempting to force change on things. Buddhism has a more definitive focus on compassion, friendship, and ethical behavior—and on the voluntary association of the *sangha* (or community). When Zen Buddhists question all of the constructions of consciousness, even the existence of the self—and even metaphorically advocate killing the Buddha—they are expressing a sort of libertarian anarchism. But that anarchism is combined with the value of *ahimsa* or nonviolence. Contemporary interpreters of these traditions—such as Gary Snyder—have shown how non-violence and anarchist critique of states fit with the deeper sense of no-self and interdependence found in these traditions.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, to bring in the most important contemporary advocate of nonviolence, Mohandas K. Gandhi expressed anarchist aspirations combined with the ideal of nonviolence. Gandhi dreamed of pure democratic self-rule that would be divorced from the need for violence—and thus the need for state power. Gandhi wrote:

Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy.... Yes. It is realizable to the extent non-violence is realizable. That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence.<sup>11</sup>

Gandhi explained further in this same work that a purely democratic state would be one of “enlightened anarchy” in which persons ruled themselves without violence or the need for governmental authority. Of course, for Gandhi—as for others with pacifist and anarchist sympathies—this represents an ideal and an aspiration. Whether such a world is finally possible, is another question.

To bring this historical discussion to full circle, let us note that Gandhi and Tolstoy shared much in common in terms of worldview. They corresponded and Gandhi named one of his first communes “Tolstoy Farm.” Gandhi and Tolstoy were both engaged in a radical project of revaluating values—with a

10 G. Snyder, *Earth Household: Technical Notes & Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York: New Directions, 1957).

11 Mohandas K. Gandhi, “Enlightened Anarchy” [1939] in *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, ed. R. Mukherjee (New York: Penguin, 1996), 79.

religious background influencing their ideas about the means to be employed and the ends to be pursued. Tolstoy's conclusion with regard to anarchism was that it was essentially right; but that anarchism as a political movement was wrong about the means. In short, he rejected violence as the proper means for political, social, and moral transformation—an idea that is quite similar to what Gandhi and his most famous disciple Martin Luther King, Jr., thought. Here is Tolstoy's explanation:

The Anarchists are right in everything; in the negation of the existing order and in the assertion that, without Authority there could not be worse violence than that of Authority under existing conditions. They are mistaken only in thinking that anarchy can be instituted by a violent revolution.<sup>12</sup>

Tolstoy's remark clearly reminds us of the distinction between means and ends. While Christian, Greek, and Asian sources can be appealed to in understanding connections between anarchism and pacifism, the real issues are conceptual. Is pacifism necessarily connected with anarchism? And is anarchism necessarily connected to pacifism? The answer to both of these questions is "No!" There are militant anarchists, who advocate violence. And there are state-centered pacifists, who believe that the solution to violence is the expansion of state power and pacification by way of democratization and liberalization. The rest of this essay will examine the conceptual terrain in which pacifism and anarchism overlap, while acknowledging counter-arguments from both of pacifist and anarchist positions that do not share in this overlapping ideal.

### **The Varieties of Anarchism and Pacifism**

One difficulty here is that anarchism and pacifism are both family resemblance terms. There are varieties of anarchism and of pacifism. To acknowledge a pluralistic approach fits well within the anarchist-pacifist matrix, since both anarchists and pacifists tend to be opposed to hierarchical essentializing and closed-minded conceptual domination. Perhaps the clearest way that the varieties of anarchism and pacifism overlap is in their rejection of domination and critique of power. While militant anarchists may believe that violence is necessary in order to overcome the violence of political authority, the militant

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12 Leo Tolstoy, "On Anarchy" [1900], *The Anarchist Library*, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/leo-tolstoy-on-anarchy>.

anarchist's goal is not to create further violent and domineering structures. Rather, even the militant anarchist dreams of a time when violence will no longer be necessary. One way the varieties of anarchism can be fleshed out is with regard to the degree of violence that is tolerated or thought to be necessary—both in the revolutionary period during which the state will be transformed and in the subsequent post-state, anarchist utopia.

The variety of pacifisms can be fleshed out with regard to the degree and extent and scope of violence that is morally permitted. Thus, while most pacifists are opposed to war, not all are opposed to the use of police force. And while most pacifists think that deliberately killing human beings is wrong, pacifists will not agree about our obligations to nonhuman animals or the use of violence in self- (or other-) defense.

Anarchists are generally opposed to states and political hierarchies. And pacifists are generally opposed to war and more broadly to killing. By definition (as noted most famously by Max Weber) states possess a monopoly of legitimate violence in a given geographic area. States retain the right to go to war against other states. They also possess the right to demand that citizens fight on behalf of the state. And they have the power to punish those who refuse to support the state and its military policies—such punishment including both deprivation of liberty and the possibility of the death penalty. In other words, the state asserts an exclusive right to kill. If pacifism, most broadly construed, is opposed to killing, then pacifists will tend to reject the idea that the state has a right to kill. A pacifist-anarchist syllogism of the following sort explains this basic argument. (1) Killing is wrong and unjustifiable. (2) But states kill. Therefore (3), states are wrong and unjustified. There is much more to be said here, including details about the sorts of killing that matter and further discussion of what actions to take if this syllogism is sound.

Perhaps some killing—as a last resort in self-defense—can be viewed as justified by some pacifists. We should also note that states serve other functions besides protecting persons against domestic and foreign enemies—redistributing wealth or providing education, healthcare, etc. It is possible that state actions of these sorts can be justified or legitimated. However, underlying even these seemingly benign sorts of state action is force and the threat of force, up to and including the threat of the death penalty or of being killed by military/police forces. The general gist of a pacifist-anarchist argument maintains that so long as states retain the capacity to use lethal force, they are not justifiable.

A further and more subtle argument may be made by pacifist-anarchists, with regard to the hierarchies, authoritarian structures, and institutional defects created by both military and political structures. One problem is the



so-called “military-industrial complex.” The state is supported by military apparatus, and this fuels an economic system in which political and military power are linked to economic power and profit. Furthermore, structural issues within contemporary polities may in fact reinforce racial, class, gender, and other hierarchies—and use military or police power to do so. Here we might mention the growing problem of the “prison-industrial complex.” Poor people and members of minority groups are on the receiving end of state violence—organized by police power and the prison system. Not only does this system unleash violence upon poor minorities, but it also serves both to increase the level of violence in the world—by creating a class of criminals (and what Angela Davis has called “criminality”<sup>13</sup>)—and to reinforce the need for authoritarian structures of political power—by making us safer by putting more criminals in jail and thus creating a vicious circle of criminality and prison with profits made by those who run the prisons. Anarchists have long been in the lead in terms of prison reform. They have natural allies in pacifist opponents of the death penalty and other advocates of decriminalization and decarceration. More of course, needs to be said here with regard to the practical methods for decriminalization and decarceration.

Let us return, however, to the analysis of the conceptual matrix that relates the varieties of anarchism and pacifism. I will outline one matrix of possibilities here in order to illustrate the challenge of surveying this conceptual terrain.

One question to be considered is the moral question of whether anarchist ends *should* be brought about by violent or nonviolent means; a related question is whether *in fact* anarchist ends can be brought about by either violent or nonviolent means. In other words, we should distinguish between *moral* concerns, on the one hand, and *prudential*, *pragmatic*, or *strategic* concerns on the other. As we shall see in the conclusion, militant anarchists argue that nonviolence is not an effective means to employ in pursuit of anarchist ends. Defenders of nonviolence who follow Gandhi and King will argue that strategic nonviolence can be a useful tool. A strong moral argument is made by pacifists who argue that there is a moral requirement to unify means and ends. Thus we should admit that for some absolute pacifists, an anarchist goal may be practically unattainable: moral restrictions on means may imply that in practice it is unlikely (or even impossible) to do what may be necessary to bring about the anarchist goal. Of course, the pragmatic or strategic question requires empirical and historical grounding. There can be no *a priori* argument that says that nonviolence will not be effective. One thing is obvious: absolute pacifist-anarchists will argue that we have a moral obligation to pursue the

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13 A.Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).

anarchist goal of abolishing the state, while remaining committed to nonviolent means—and if that means a long and difficult road, then that is simply the nature of moral action in a tragic world.

One conceptual tool is the distinction between *absolute* and *contingent* versions of anarchism and pacifism. The difference between absolute and contingent pacifisms is found in the degree to which one avoids killing and violence.<sup>14</sup> Absolute pacifists adhere to principled nonviolence as a moral absolute, basing their commitment in some form of moral absolutism grounded in *a priori* moral claims. Absolute pacifists simply refuse to commit or support violence (of course, one would need to fill in a further definition of which sorts of violence count—the overt and obvious violence of war, the violence of police forces used to establish law and order, the structural violence associated with racism, sexism, and the like, or the violence of animal farming, etc.). On the other hand, contingent pacifists may prefer nonviolence and may reject most forms of violence and war. But contingent pacifists may believe that under ideal conditions violence can be justified. For example, contingent pacifism often develops from a stringent reading of just war theory.<sup>15</sup> The just war theory tells us that war can be justified in some circumstances: when there is a just cause, legitimate intention, proportional amount of violence, and limited/targeted violence that avoids collateral damage, etc. Contingent pacifists may agree with the basic principles of just war theory, while also holding that war as typically fought by militarized nation-states with contemporary weapons rarely lives up to the standards of the just war theory. Thus the contingent pacifist can imagine circumstances in which violence can be justified, while arguing that in fact contemporary violence is rarely justified. Beyond this, the just war tradition provides a set of criteria or principles that can be appealed to in justifying violence. And at the far end of the spectrum, so-called “realism” takes violence for granted, requiring no special moral justification for violence (although realists can appreciate strategic and pragmatic reasons to limit violence).

A similar spectrum can be fleshed out with regard to anarchism. Anarchists can be absolutely opposed to states. Typically, anarchism is understood in its absolutist variety, where anarchists hold that there is simply no way that any state could be justified. In most cases, absolute anarchism will be based upon a

14 See A. Fiala, “Pacifism,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2006, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pacifism>; and A. Fiala, “Contingent Pacifism and Contingently Pacifist Arguments,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 45, no. 4 (2014): 463–477.

15 See Fiala, “Contingent Pacifism,” and L. May, “Contingent Pacifism and Selective Refusal,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 43, no. 1 (2012): 1–18.

*priori* arguments about necessary or essential conflicts between autonomy and obedience. Robert Paul Wolff explains, for example, that notions of justification, obedience, right, and duty require *a priori* deduction—and he holds that given the obligation of individual autonomy there can be no state justified in this way. He concludes:

If all men have a continuing obligation to achieve the highest degree of autonomy possible, then there would appear to be no state whose subjects have a moral obligation to obey its commands. Hence, the concept of a *de jure* legitimate state would appear to be vacuous, and philosophical anarchism would seem to be the only reasonable political belief for an enlightened man.<sup>16</sup>

Although anarchism is often understood in this absolutist sense, there can be a form of “contingent anarchism” (made explicit, for example, in the writing of Harold Laski)—in which our obligations of obedience to states are contingent, depending upon whether the state fulfills its obligations and is justified or legitimate.

Laski explained that the free citizenry retains the threat of rebellion as a last resort. He said, “Liberty is nothing if it is not the organized and conscious power to resist in the last resort. The implied threat of contingent anarchy is a safeguard against the abuse of government.”<sup>17</sup> And he explains further that what he means by “contingent anarchy” is that there is “a right of men to rebellion.”<sup>18</sup> A “contingent anarchist” most likely believes that states rarely live up to the standards of their own theories of justification. Contingent anarchism is thus empirical or *a posteriori*—it is based upon a judgment about how well a given state lives up to its theory of justification.

Now social contract theories arguably provide the best theory of legitimation of states.<sup>19</sup> However, in reality contemporary liberal democratic states routinely fail to live up to the best standards of the social contract theory. And so it is possible to derive a contingently anarchist conclusion: contemporary states are not justified since they fail to deliver on what they promise. The notion of contingent anarchism may also help us make sense of the interpretation of the social contract theory found in Locke and Nozick (and in Simmons’

16 R.P. Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1970), 17.

17 H.J. Laski, *The Grammar of Politics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1925), 144.

18 H.J. Laski, *Liberty in the Modern State* (1930; reprint, London: Allen & Unwin, 1961), 78.

19 I will take that for granted here but discuss it in much more detail elsewhere. See, for example, Fiala, *Against Religion, States, and Wars*.

interpretation of Locke).<sup>20</sup> Locke suggests in the *Second Treatise* that states can be overturned when they fail to live up to the promise of the social contract theory. Nozick holds that only minimal states can be justified, which implies that most contemporary states are not justified—since these states are much more than minimal states in Nozick's sense.<sup>21</sup>

Moving beyond contingent pacifism, we return to the social contract theory of the state, which holds that states are justified by way of the social contract. Most contemporary liberal-democratic theory can be included here—including Rawls' idealized contract theory. Finally, at the far end of the spectrum, we find realist justifications of states (which we may also describe as versions of absolute sovereignty of the sort associated with Carl Schmitt). Realist or absolutist theories of sovereignty are not interested in moral justifications of the state. Rather, they maintain that power makes states and that states exist, regardless of the theory of justification underlying them

We can align these various positions as seen in the following table (*fig. 1*). Notice that there are several contradictory or near-contradictory possibilities noted here. Absolute Anarchism does not fit well with either the theory of justified violence or with realism about war. The reason for this is that justified wars and realist violence tend to be caused and sustained by states and political authorities. There is a contradiction in using “anything-goes” violence in pursuit of the complete destruction of states and political authorities, since the kind of violence imagined in pursuit of this goal would most likely need to be hierarchically organized. Put bluntly, there is a contradiction in the idea of an “anarchist army” (how would such an “army” be organized and funded?) that would fight using military tactics in order to overthrow governments, which are themselves based upon the use of military power.

At the other end of the matrix there is a contradiction or near-contradiction in the idea that absolute pacifism or contingent pacifism could be united with a notion of absolute sovereignty. The contradiction here is that absolute sovereignty rests on the use or threat of violence and military power—and that such a political idea contains no room for pacifism. To put this bluntly, there cannot be a pacifist form of absolute sovereignty. Two obvious conclusions (noted here) can be derived. First, there is a very easy conjunction between absolute pacifism and absolute anarchism. Second, there is a very easy conjunction between realism about violence and realism about political life (or what

20 See A.J. Simmons, *On the Edge of Anarchy: Locke, Consent, and the Limits of Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

21 R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

I call absolute sovereignty). Again not all absolute pacifists need be absolute anarchists—or vice versa. But these two positions do fit nicely together.

There are a variety of other ways we may organize and conceptualize the differences and overlap among the varieties of pacifism and anarchism. We noted above that there are important differences between *a priori* arguments and more consequentially based *a posteriori* sorts of arguments. A further question asks about the sorts of obligations (whether strong and infeasible or weak and defeasible) that anarchism or pacifism impose upon individuals and how this translates to practical affairs. If one is a convinced absolute anarchist, should one obey state laws or violate them whenever they conflict with one's autonomy?

Wolff and others acknowledge that there may be prudential reasons for obedience. But a strong commitment to individual autonomy may point toward a justification of law-breaking. Furthermore, a strong commitment to the view that states ought to be abolished may point toward a commitment to various forms of direct action, including (for the non-pacifist) violent direct action. On the other side of things, pacifists may also feel that they ought to take action to avoid being implicated in state violence. Thus pacifist tax-resisters have argued against paying taxes that support war and other forms of state violence. And pacifists have refused to serve in the military. Some pacifists and anarchists—such as some early American transcendentalists and members of the 1960s counterculture—attempted to withdraw from society completely in order to form pacifist-anarchist communes. Further questions of strategy and action remain. In order to act upon one's anarchist or pacifist inclinations, should one vote, protest, engage in civil disobedience, etc.?

### The Militant Objection and Reply

Now it may be that pacifist-anarchists are hopelessly utopian. It might be that something about the nature of the human world creates the ever-present possibility of violence, and thus necessitates the need for military defense and the state-system that prepares for war and organizes war when needed. Carl Schmitt is perhaps the best-known modern theorist of the notion of absolute sovereignty and its connection with power and violence. Schmittian arguments can be directed against both pacifism and anarchism, as anti-political utopian dreaming. We will return to this in a moment. But let's note that militant anarchists also view pacifism as a political dead-end. Derrick Jensen, a green anarchist, argues explicitly and extensively against pacifism. He thinks that pacifists have been "pacified," that is encouraged by the dominant system

TABLE 1 *Varieties of Anarchism and Pacifism*

	Absolute Pacifism	Contingent Pacifism	Justified Violence	Realism
	<i>Violence is always wrong; nonviolence is the only legitimate means of social change</i>	<i>Violence is usually wrong (but it can be justified in rare ideal and limited cases of self-defense or just wars, etc.)</i>	<i>Violence can be justified—for example, by the just war theory</i>	<i>There is no need for special justifications of violence, since the real world is one of conflict, violence, domination, and war</i>
<b>Absolute Anarchism:</b> <i>No state or political authority can be justified</i>	Nonviolence is used in pursuit of the goal of eliminating states; rejection of all power, hierarchy, domination, and violence  <b>CONCLUSION 1:</b> Radical and absolutist critiques of violence and critiques of political authority (and “monopolies of violence”) are easily conjoined	Nonviolence is preferred but some idealized and limited violence could be justified in pursuit of the goal of eliminating states	<b>NEAR-CONTRADICTION</b> Violence can be justified in pursuit of the goal of eliminating states (however, the problem is that without a justified political authority, “just war” principles make little sense	<b>CONTRADICTION</b> Absolute Anarchism contradicts the Realists non-critical “justification” of violence. Realism provides no moral limit on violence—or on the concentration of violence (the “monopolization of violence”) in hierarchical power
<b>Contingent Anarchism:</b> <i>Some political formations can have limited justification—but they rarely live up to the theories that would justify them</i>	Nonviolence is used in pursuit of reform and in criticism of political life	Nonviolence is preferred but some idealized and limited violence could be justified in pursuit of reform and criticism of political life	Violence can be justified in pursuit of the goal of reform and in criticism of political life, even including revolution	No need for special justification of violence in pursuit of reform or critique of political life

TABLE 1 *Varieties of Anarchism and Pacifism (cont.)*

	Absolute Pacifism	Contingent Pacifism	Justified Violence	Realism
<b>Social Contract Theory:</b> <i>States are justified by appeal to the social contract</i>	Nonviolence to be used within the context of liberal-democratic politics	Nonviolence is preferred but some idealized and limited violence can be legitimated by appeal to the social contract	Violence can be justified in defense of states that are justified by the social contract theory	No need for special justification of violence in pursuit of the goods of the social contract theory
<b>Realism (Absolute Sovereignty):</b> <i>Political justifications are ideological; states are created and maintained through domination and force</i>	<b>CONTRADICTION</b> Absolute Pacifism and Absolute Sovereignty contradict one another since Realism places no limits on the Sovereign may employ	<b>NEAR-CONTRADICTION</b> Nonviolence is preferred but some idealized and limited violence could be justified in defense of absolute sovereignty (however the Absolute Sovereign will tend not to care about such moral limits)	Violence can be justified in pursuit of the goals of the Absolute Sovereign	No need for special justification of violence in pursuit of the goals of the Absolute Sovereign  <b>CONCLUSION 2:</b> Realism about violence and Realist notions of Absolute Sovereignty are easily and often conjoined

to believe that their pacifism is effective.<sup>22</sup> However, Jensen holds that nonviolence cannot dismantle the violent power structures of political life. Jensen suggests that states allow pacifism because it is nonthreatening and not effective—and that pacifists should take heed to note that they are witlessly playing a game permitted them by those in power. Jensen's argument develops ideas found in Ward Churchill's *Pacifism as Pathology* (for which Jensen wrote a new preface in 2007).<sup>23</sup> Jensen and Churchill both maintain that violent systems can only be fought with violence. And they think that violence can be effective. They also think that pacifism is a pathology of the privileged: white suburbanites have the luxury of advocating nonviolence, since they have a lot to lose from violent revolution and really do not have much to gain from

22 D. Jensen, *Endgame*, vol. 2 (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006), 732.

23 W. Churchill, *Pacifism as Pathology* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2007).

disrupting the status quo. Jensen adds that pacifism is a “death wish,” since pacifists are willing to die but not willing to kill.<sup>24</sup> He concludes that this is “despicable and insane” and irresponsible.<sup>25</sup>

Jensen and Churchill suggest that pacifists fail to understand that violence is an essential part of politics. And if we have a political goal in mind—even a political goal such as the end of politics in anarchism—we must employ politically appropriate means. In other words, since political action requires violence, we must employ violence in pursuit of political objectives. To put it bluntly, pacifism is simply an ineffective political tool.

Pacifists might respond to this objection by noting that pacifism is not passivity.<sup>26</sup> As Gandhi and King showed, active nonviolent resistance can be effective. Moreover, Gandhi, King, and other advocates of nonviolence have frequently argued that there is a fundamental contradiction in using violence to fight against violence. Pacifists encourage us to unify our means and our ends. If we are looking for a world without violence, power, domination, and hierarchy, the path to that world should be nonviolent and non-domineering. To quote Audre Lorde (somewhat out of context here), the master’s tools cannot be used to dismantle the master’s house.<sup>27</sup> Lorde’s point was about the difficulty of articulating a feminist, lesbian, and black consciousness within the confines of the typically male, heterosexual, and white academic context. But the point is one that King and Gandhi would appreciate. To call for revolutionary violence in opposition to repressive state violence keeps us tied to the master-slave dialectic and the struggle for political power. Anarchists and pacifists want to break free of that dialectic in order to find or found something new.

Now let’s turn to Carl Schmitt’s concept of the political and his critique of pacifism. Schmitt’s argument is significantly similar to the arguments of Jensen and Churchill. Schmitt—the notorious philosopher of political power often associated with dictatorship and Nazism—argues that the possibility of war is essential to the concept of the political. The realm of the political, according to Schmitt, is determined by the difference between friend and enemy. That essential political fact opens up the ever-present possibility of war. Schmitt is not necessarily a war-monger. However, his theory of the political points toward the necessary connection between politics and war. Indeed, he argues that pacifism essential negates the possibility of politics. He says:

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24 Jensen, *Endgame*, 627.

25 Ibid., 688.

26 See. G. Lakey, “Nonviolent Action as The Sword that Heals,” *New Training for Change*, 2001, [http://new.trainingforchange.org/nonviolent\\_action\\_sword\\_that\\_heals](http://new.trainingforchange.org/nonviolent_action_sword_that_heals).

27 A. Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. R. Lewis and S. Mills (London: Routledge, 2003), 25–28.



A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics. It is conceivable that such a world might contain many very interesting antitheses and contrasts, competitions and intrigues of every kind, but there would not be a meaningful antithesis whereby men could be required to sacrifice life, authorized to shed blood, and kill other human beings. For the definition of the political, it is here even irrelevant whether such a world without politics is desirable as an ideal situation. The phenomenon of the political can be understood only in the context of the ever-present possibility of the friend-and-enemy grouping, regardless of the aspects which this possibility implies for morality, aesthetics, and economics.<sup>28</sup>

Schmitt's argument returns us toward the interesting conjunction of anarchism and pacifism. Anarchists imagine finding or founding some sort of voluntary social organization that lies outside of the political realm. But, according to Schmitt, the political realm includes the possibility of war and the ubiquity of the friend-enemy distinction. Thus if one were to develop non-political voluntary associations, the friend-enemy distinction would have to be overcome—and along with that we would have overcome the possibility of war and the need for politics. In other words, from Schmitt's perspective, pacifism and anarchism are both worlds away from political reality in its ordinary forms.

Now in response, allow me to underline my purpose in putting Jensen, Churchill, and Schmitt together here. When anarchists and revolutionaries focus on the effectiveness of violence and the necessity of militant action they share much in common with conservative statists such as Schmitt. Violence is used by states in the project of establishing order and defending against domestic and foreign enemies. Anarchist critics of state violence, oppression, repression, and domination must think very carefully about the role of violence in opposing all of this. The worry is that when critics of the state take up the very tools used by the state to oppose the state, they fall back in to the same logic of friends and enemies, power and domination, which was the focus of the original criticism of the state.

## Conclusion

Pacifism and anarchism are utopian. We continue to live in a world of friends and enemies. War and violence continue to plague mankind. Bad people use

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28 C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 35.

violence for pernicious purposes. States retain great power over our lives. Political leaders are corrupt and bad laws violate autonomy. We are quite far away from anything resembling the free and voluntary associations imagined by the anarchists; and we are far away from the peaceful, harmonious, nonviolent coexistence imagined by the pacifists. Schmitt, Churchill, and Jensen point out in different ways the utopian nature of anarchism and pacifism. But let us return, in conclusion, to the religious history with which we began. Prophetic voices and religious authors have long indicated the importance of utopian ideals, moral commandments, and radical critique of the status quo. The ideal remains quite far off. But unless we clarify our ideals, we won't know which way to work to make progress nor will we know which tools we ought to employ. When Jesus told us to love our enemies he clarified a direction and a method. He never promised that the anarchist-pacifist path would be easy—or that it would be immediately effective. However, for those who see important connections between anarchism and pacifism, that path is the only one worth pursuing.

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# Anarchism and Moral Philosophy

*Benjamin Franks*

## Introduction

Max Stirner argued that the essence of the individual is always more than its definition: “nothing that is designated as my essence exhausts me.”<sup>1</sup> So, too, any statement about anarchism is not exhaustive, for it can always be met with counter-examples. The various accounts of anarchist moral philosophy are indicative of the limits and incompleteness of any single description. Nonetheless, different anarchist theorists and movements can, in part, be identified by their distinctive arrangement of meta-ethical beliefs and identification and prioritization of different ethical principles, and the ways in which they are applied.

Because of this plurality and pervasiveness of ethical discourses, moral analysis has been identified as one of the core characteristics of anarchism, especially in contexts where it is distinguished from revolutionary movements, such as orthodox Marxism. As the philosopher Simon Critchley notes: “Anarchism has tended to be an ethical discourse about revolutionary practice.”<sup>2</sup> The radical anthropologist David Graeber makes a similar observation: “Politically, what is most compelling about anarchism is its emphasis on ethics as a binding factor in political practice.”<sup>3</sup> By contrast, orthodox Marxism is associated with broader economic analysis as part of a broader theory of revolutionary strategy.<sup>4</sup> Graeber goes on to develop, nuance, and evaluate this apparent dichotomy, highlighting the intersections between heterodox Marxist interests in concrete, ethical practice and anarchist interest in high theory, a

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1 Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own* (London: Rebel Press, 1993), 366.

2 D. Graeber, “The Twilight of Vanguardism,” *The Anarchist Library*, 2008, 6, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-graeber-the-twilight-of-vanguardism.pdf>. Note that this is a slightly different version of a paper with the same title by the same author in *Realizing the Impossible*, eds. J. MacPhee and E. Reulan (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2007), 250–253.

3 S. Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding* (London: Verso, 2007), 93.

4 Graeber, “The Twilight of Vanguardism,” 6; Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding*, 146. See also J. Heckert and J. Biehl, quoted in M. Wilson, *Rules Without Rulers: The Possibilities and Limits of Anarchism* (Winchester, U.K.: Zero, 2014), 88–89.

point borne out in, for instance, the works of autonomists like Harry Cleaver and the autonomist-influenced David Harvey.<sup>5</sup> However, Graeber argues that anarchism is

... primarily an ethics of practice; and it insists, before anything else, that one's means must be consonant with one's ends; one cannot create freedom through authoritarian means; that as much as possible, one must embody the society one wishes to create.<sup>6</sup>

Graeber's description of anarchism is pertinent to this article for three reasons. First, he confirms the priority given to ethical evaluation within anarchism. Second, he ties this ethical analysis to material practices; and thirdly, he identifies a commitment to prefiguration—that the means have to be in accordance with the ends. These latter two points will be developed later to argue that anarchism is more properly understood as a sophisticated materialist ethical theory. So as well as providing a survey of ethical positions found within the main anarchist currents, this contribution will argue that it is more productive and consistent with the main features of anarchism to regard it as closer to the radical virtue theory of Alasdair MacIntyre and the revolutionary Aristotelian tradition, rather than, for instance, a rights-based ethical theory as some proponents and critics present it.<sup>7</sup>

Amongst the key theorists of the classical anarchist canon, William Godwin, Michael Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon all directly address the nature of anarchist ethics or have impacted on the development of (1) meta-ethics, (2) normative ethics, and (3) applied moral analysis.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, moral terminology is a significant feature of

5 See, for example, H. Cleaver, "Kropotkin, Self-valorization and the Crisis of Marxism," *Anarchist Studies* 2, no. 2 (1994): 119–135. See also D. Harvey, *The Promise of Revolutionary Humanism*, Strike Pocket Pamphlet Series 3 (London: Strike, 2015).

6 Graeber, "The Twilight of Vanguardism," 6–7.

7 G. Baldelli, *Social Anarchism* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1971), 79–114; D. Knowles, *Political Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2001), 249–250; Wilson, *Rules Without Rulers*, 2–3, 94–95; R.P. Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism* (New York: Harper, 1970); J. Wolff, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006), 30, 46–47.

8 See for instance William Godwin, *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin* (London: Freedom Press, 1986), 64–87; Mikhail Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, ed. G.P. Maximoff (New York: Free Press, 1953), 120–169; Peter Kropotkin, *Ethics: Origins and Development* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992), especially 268–279; Peter Kropotkin, *Anarchist Morality* (Edmonton, Alta.: Black Cat, 2005); Emma Goldman, "The Victim of Morality" [1913], *Positive Atheism*, <http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/goldmanmor.htm>;

contemporary anarchist activist discussion even if it is sometimes inconsistent or under-developed. Key concepts like “equality,” “freedom,” “solidarity,” and “justice” are pervasive features of anarchist discussions, being important enough to feature in the titles of activist groups.<sup>9</sup> This account of the intersection between anarchism and moral philosophy is structured on these three sub-disciplines (meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics) in order to identify and evaluate the distinctive, albeit overlapping variants of anarchism.

Taking into account the chapter’s opening assertions—first, that the prevalence of moral discourse is a core characteristic of anarchism, and, second, that for any assertion about anarchism there are counter-examples—then it is unsurprising that there are anti-moralist currents within anarchism. It is appropriate then to begin with these amoralist and nihilist positions.

### Meta-ethics

Amoralism and nihilism are meta-ethical positions. The nihilist argues that moral values are undiscoverable,<sup>10</sup> whilst the amoralist, by contrast, does not dispute that moral principles may exist and are discoverable but that they have no binding force. Interwoven with these traditions is a tendency to consider ethical principles and moral values as simply the product of dominating power wishing to silence or channel dissent.<sup>11</sup> Goldman’s denunciation of “morality” is a good example, as she sees such discourses as a way for dominant powers to discipline women for their own ends.<sup>12</sup> Other examples of amoralism can

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M. Hewitt, “Emma Goldman: The Case for Anarcho-Feminism,” in *The Anarchist Papers*, ed. D. Roussopoulos (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1986), 170–171; Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, “Justice in Revolution and in the Church,” in *Property is Theft! A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Anthology*, ed. I. McKay (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2011), 619–684; A. Prichard, “The Ethical Foundations of Proudhon’s Republican Anarchism,” in *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, eds. B. Franks and M. Wilson (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 86–112.

9 For example, the Freedom Press Group, Climate Justice Committee, the British Libertarian Group (1961–1992), Solidarity, etc.

10 J. Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity: from Kierkegaard to Camus* (London: Routledge, 1995), 173.

11 The impact of Friedrich Nietzsche’s deconstruction of normative ethics may be relevant here. See, for example, J. Purkis, “Anarchy Unbound: A Tribute to John Moore,” in *I Am Not a Man, I Am Dynamite*, eds. J. Moore and S. Sunshine (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), 5; and D. Colson, “Nietzsche and the Libertarian Workers’ Movement,” in Moore and Sunshine, *I Am Not a Man*, 12–28.

12 Goldman, “The Victim of Morality.”

be found in the early egoist movement<sup>13</sup> and more recently in the individualist insurrectionist current (such as contributors to 325 magazine's *Anarchy Civil or Subversive*):

With no sovereign systems of morality, theory, principles or social abstractions standing above the singular individual, the nihilist-anarchist attacks all systems, including identity and ideology systems, as obstacles to our self-realisation. The struggle is against not only the domination of controlling social organisation and widespread tranquilisation, but also against inherited repressive programming and the force of daily life, and so our struggle is a constant tension where what we must destroy and transcend is much more obvious than where we might end up.<sup>14</sup>

The nihilist argument is right to criticize the position found in other anarchisms (as will be discussed below) that there are discoverable, universal moral principles, as there seems no indisputable method for ascertaining them. Such appeals to universal morality obscure the power relationships by which values are constructed and maintained. The problem is that nihilists and amorlists, despite their rejections of morality, still use moral arguments to defend their position, as when they attack the “dishonesty,” “wilful ignorance,” and “cowardice” of other anarchists who fail to actively and consistently resist oppression<sup>15</sup> and support the “fraternity” and “courage” found in individualist insurrectionary movements.<sup>16</sup> Goldman, too, has an account of the fully flourishing person, capable of full-liberated social relations, as opposed to the “grey-grown victim of a grey-grown Morality.”<sup>17</sup> If values really were unimportant then there is no reason to favor the honest, wise, liberated, and flourishing individual over the selfish, gutless, and bewildered. Instead, the anarchist nihilist and amoralist tend to construct an ethical basis on the individual's own moral feelings and individual conscience: “As an anarchist, I reject moral codes, but I have the

13 See, for example, D. Marsden “The Illusion of Anarchism,” *The Egoist* 1, no. 23 (15 Sept. 1914): 1–6.

14 DMP, “Beyond the Movement—Anarchy!,” in *Anarchy Civil or Subversive* [n.d], 12–14, <http://325.nostate.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/civil-anarchism-book.pdf>.

15 Ibid. See also Anarchist-nihilists, “Against the British ‘Anti-capitalist Movement’: Brief Notes on Their Ongoing Failure,” in *Anarchy Civil or Subversive*, 20, 23; Anarchist-nihilists Against the Activist Establishment, “Fuck Indymedia and the Anarcho-Left,” in *Anarchy Civil or Subversive*, 52–53.

16 Anarchist-nihilists, “Against the British ‘Anti-capitalist Movement,’” 24; DMP, introduction to *Anarchy Civil or Subversive*, 6.

17 Goldman, “The Victim of Morality.”

measure of my principles to hold against my life.”<sup>18</sup> This move from amorality to subjectivism (associated with Stirner) has its own problems.<sup>19</sup>

Subjectivism has a number of attractive features. It avoids the ontological problems of a fixed set of universal principles, which undermines human freedom, and the epistemological problems of determining a methodology by which this universal set of values can be identified. The rejection of universal standards means that individuals are free to create their own goals. It avoids the recreation of hierarchies of power upon which universalisms rest (as discussed below). However, there are substantial problems with such subjectivism.

Amongst the most serious flaws in the belief that the individual (or individual consciousness) constitutes the basis for morality are: (1) it denies the possibility of moral disagreement and thus the potential to transform ethical principles and practice; (2) it can be used to justify all manner of actions which are inconsistent even with the proposed position of individualist insurrectionists, including the promotion of hierarchies; (3) it ignores the material, social conditions that form a necessary (but not complete) part of ethical discourses; and thus (4) it has an incomplete account of agency.

If the individual is the single, ultimate arbiter of moral knowledge then there is no basis to challenge a moral statement. A moral dispute becomes simply a disagreement between two rival consciences, one approving of the action and the other disapproving.<sup>20</sup> There are no external grounds for resolving disagreements or for revising and transforming current principles or changing behaviors. Thus, for a subjectivist, any disagreement between an anarchist committed to contesting hierarchies of oppression and a statist approving of discrimination and racial hierarchies is reduced to a matter of preferences. A subjectivist can argue that whilst you may find cowardice, dishonesty and ignorance inferior to bravery, integrity, and solidarity, that is merely a matter of opinion. So a rejection of murder, child abuse, or wanton environmental destruction becomes reduced to personal preference, with the most powerful will taking precedence.

Similarly, the appeal to conscience fails to recognize that individual preferences and cognitive structures for decision-making and articulation of those choices are partly the product of (as well as partly constituting) material

18 L., “Fragment: Illegality,” in *Anarchy Civil or Subversive*, 37.

19 Whether this subjectivism is consistent with Stirner’s egoism is a matter of debate. At first glance it seems consistent with his fluid, but self-prioritizing, unique subject. The individual egoist, according to Stirner, is the ultimate arbiter of value: “If it is right for me, it is right” (Stirner, *Ego and Its Own*, 191).

20 H. Gensler, *Ethics: A Contemporary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 24–25.



social practices. The types of differentiation, the forms of analysis and what is raised as a problem worthy of consideration, take place because of absences, contradictions, and/or conflicts in material practices. These are not just the product of an individual conscience (as standard idealists would argue), but the interplay of different consciousnesses (inter-subjectivity), their labor, and other material resources (dead labor). This account is in agreement with John P. Clark's anarchist reading of Hegel, who argues that transformation occurs by recognizing the conflicts caused by material limits and seeking ways of going beyond them.<sup>21</sup> Transcendence from existing practices and values is a necessary feature of a radical moral theory which aims to promote substantive economic and social change.

By failing to link moral decisions to the concrete practices in which judgments arise, subjectivists fail to recognize how ethical subject identities are partly constituted by their engagement in these activities. Instead of an abstract consciousness or "empty field," moral actors acknowledge that they have particular, but alterable (and negatable) social roles in different social contexts. The duties of a physician, for instance, are different from those of a member of a citizen's militia.

Whilst Stirner is conventionally regarded as a subjectivist, Saul Newman suggests a potentially fruitful (but also potentially anachronistic) post-structuralist reading of Stirner in which the Stirnerite ego is a "singularity"<sup>22</sup> or "swirl of singularities."<sup>23</sup> These singularities have no essential positive characteristics, but are formed in the interactions between different practices and are open to radical transformation through self-activity. Although Newman's Stirner is much more materialist than his standard critics would suggest,<sup>24</sup> his account does not altogether escape the accusation of promoting hierarchies as it is still the singularities that constitute Stirner (and other self-identifying egoists) that take priority.<sup>25</sup>

21 J.P. Clark, *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 64–65.

22 S. Newman, quoted in D. Rousselle, "Postanarchism and its Critics: A Conversation with Saul Newman," *Anarchist Studies* 21, no. 2 (2013): 80.

23 Ibid., 81.

24 See, for instance, K. Marx, *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 130ff. For an alternative anarchist-communist reading of Stirner see I. McKay, *An Anarchist FAQ*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2012), 646–648.

25 "Egoism does not think of sacrificing anything, giving away anything that it wants; it simply decides, what I want I must have and will procure" (Stirner, *Ego and its Own*, 257).

The inclusion of Stirner in the canon of anarchist thinkers is largely based on the German jurist Paul Elzbacher's initial construction<sup>26</sup> and is partly responsible for anarchism being associated with and dismissed as idealism, a criticism most commonly associated with orthodox Marxism.<sup>27</sup> Yet Stirner's inclusion is highly contested. Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt argue that the abstract individualist and idealist features of Stirner's work (a representation that Newman contests) make Stirner's egoism incompatible with the broadly social orientation of anarchism.<sup>28</sup> Kropotkin, too, in his incomplete final work, ends with a criticism of Stirner's inadequate moral theory (which he describes as "anti-morality"). Kropotkin argues that Stirner ignores the biological, social, and psychological resources in which agents build their identities and mutually beneficial social practices.<sup>29</sup>

Kropotkin, Bakunin, and contemporary advocates like Schmidt and van der Walt contend that anarchism is a materialist theory. However, the materialism to which anarchism adheres is not synonymous with the strict determinism of historical materialism. Orthodox Marxists and other economic determinists argue that moral principles are irrelevant to social change, as real transformation occurs as a result of technological changes in the economic base which follow predetermined laws of development.<sup>30</sup> Anthony Skillen points to instances of Marx's texts in which he appears to reject moral analysis, seeing ethical discourse as simply a phenomenon of bourgeois control of the means of production.<sup>31</sup> Similar lines of thought can be found in some forms of social anarchism. Class War's Adrienne Lintzgy, for instance, argues that the legal institutions predicated on notions of rights, as well as the entire conceptual

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26 R. Kinna, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 10–11, although Plekhanov included Stirner—alongside Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and various "smaller fry," such as Grave and Reclus—five years before Elzbacher. See "Anarchism and Socialism" [1895], *Marxists Internet Archive*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1895/anarch/index.htm>.

27 See Plekhanov, *Anarchism and Socialism*; Joseph Stalin, "Anarchism Or Socialism?" [1906], *Marxists Internet Archive*, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1906/12/x01.htm>.

28 M. Schmidt and L. van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009), 64–65.

29 Kropotkin, *Ethics*, 338.

30 See, for example, K. Marx *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), 20–22.

31 A. Skillen, "Workers Interests and the Proletarian Ethic: Conflicting Strains in Marxian Anti-moralism," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* Supplementary Volume 7 (1981): 55–56.

apparatus of rights itself, are simply tools to maintain the bourgeois order and to obscure the reality of class domination.<sup>32</sup>

However, even here alternatives and contradictions can be found. Lintzgy, for instance, ends his injunction against liberal conceptions of rights with a call for “class justice.” What is often at stake is confusion over repeated rejections of “moralism” for a rejection of moral analysis. The term “moralism” appears to be used in a wide variety of senses. Sometimes it refers to the deliberate construction of principles to defend hierarchical practices,<sup>33</sup> sometimes to the application of potentially radical moral principle (but in an unconsciously inconsistent way in order to serve the interests of the powerful<sup>34</sup>); and sometimes to the general application of apparently universal and neutral principles without recourse to the social contexts in which they arise and are applied.<sup>35</sup> As will be discussed, a consistent moral analysis includes identifying the material conditions which form, and are formed by, social relationships, shared practices, and their discourses. One of the criticisms made of academic ethics, within which this contribution rests, is that it often ignores the particular material conditions of its own construction and therefore is blind to its own biases and lacunae.<sup>36</sup>

The main Enlightenment positions on meta-ethics have been universalist theories. They share a number of characteristics, namely: (1) that there are objectively identifiable universal moral principles; (2) that these are not partial to any particular class or the ideal product of the superior dominant class; (3) that they can be applied objectively, even if, in practice, they are used in a distorted ways; and (4) that misapplications or misidentifications of moral principles can be identified through the use of some rational procedure.<sup>37</sup>

The main examples of Enlightenment, universalist ethics are realism (largely deontological) and naturalism (primarily utilitarian consequentialist). Despite, their significant differences, they are both committed to a

32 A. Lintzgy, “Human Rights or Class Justice,” *The Heavy Stuff* 1 [n.d.], 4.

33 Goldman, “The Victim of Morality.”

34 Harvey *The Promise of Revolutionary Humanism*, column 1.

35 See, for example, R. de Witt, “An Anarchist Response to Seattle: What Shall We Do With Anarchism?” *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* 4, no. 1 (2000), <http://flag.blackened.net/ias/7seattle.htm>; Workers Solidarity Movement, “Book Review—*Anarchy’s Cossack: Nestor Makhno*,” *Black and Red Revolution* 10 (2005): 19.

36 See, for example, M. Le Doeuff, “Long Hair, Short Ideas,” in *The Philosophical Imaginary* (London: Athlone Press, 1989), 100–127.

37 D.D. Raphael, *Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 18–22; P. McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 40.

dispassionate, systematic basis for identifying and justifying ethical principles. In the case of naturalist ethics, like John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism, empirical study demonstrates the veracity of utilitarian principles. For deontologists, like Immanuel Kant, pure Reason is the only sure way of discovering universal ethical principles. An exception to moral naturalism and realism is intuitionistic ethics, which regards moral truths as being inherently hardwired into the human subject: they are either self-evident or else identified through a separate moral sense, irreducible to reason or evidence. Intuitionists have a number of problems: first, explaining why there are moral disagreements if there is a common ethical sense; and second, accounting for the fact that the epistemological basis for an unknowable moral instinct takes moral analysis outside of critical discourse and reduces it to theology.<sup>38</sup>

Critics of "moralism" are right to be skeptical of the claims to universal value found in the Enlightenment ethics of realism and naturalism. Such universalism is ontologically and ethically suspect as humans would no longer have the freedom to develop their own values. In addition, it is highly unlikely that there are grounds for discovering universal knowledge which can be applied impartially in societies divided by class (as well as race, ethnicity, religion, etc.).<sup>39</sup> The assumption that there is a single universal reason or scientific method for the identification of values implicit to specific forms of social practice is also highly disputable.

However, this is not to reject ethics, or base it on contentious subjectivist grounds. A materially grounded ethics is possible and consistent with anarchism. Here values are generated by, and specific to, the stable social practices or traditions that form them, although there will be overlaps and continuities with similar and adjacent social practices. Humans are creatures that have some (albeit changing) biological and psychological needs which can be met in a variety of ways, and critical imaginations which are able to empathize and conceive of alternatives. To meet ever-changing needs and desires humans develop productive practices.<sup>40</sup> Many of these practices have internally generated rules which are necessary for their operation, though these are not coercively imposed or indisputable. Indeed, practitioners may adapt and change them. So, for instance, the social goods associated with communal cooking and feasting require materials (equipment, power source, and ingredients) and human labor. Anarchists argue that organizing practices in an anti-hierarchical manner

38 Bakunin seems to be anticipating this criticism of intuitionism. See *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 150–151.

39 Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State* (New York: Dover, 1970), 33, 35, 66–67.

40 See, for example, Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (London: Penguin, 1939), 180.

as possible will generate the greatest inherent goods and produce sustainable external benefits.<sup>41</sup>

Some critics have argued that having an explicit and identifiable meta-ethics would be too restrictive.<sup>42</sup> However, the critical materialism identifiable in many anarchist approaches sees values as a necessary, and indeed unavoidable, part of any social practice, although it does not identify any single value as dominant or universal. This non-universalist approach still provides grounds for shared, albeit incomplete and non-universal, criteria by which moral discussion and evaluation can take place.

It is not necessary to have a fully developed meta-ethics to have practical normative or situated ethical guidelines (however provisional and open). Many activists and critical practitioners do not, for good reason, focus on meta-ethical debates, concentrating instead on practical solutions to pressing social problems. So although the meta-ethical status associated with normative positions can be questionable, the reasons for advancing these principles are usually based on more pragmatic and political goals than on philosophical consistency.

### Normative and Situated Ethics

There are two main normative traditions. The first, consequentialism, involves assessing actions on the basis of how effectively they achieve a pre-given goal. The main consequentialist theory is largely utilitarian (“acts are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness”<sup>43</sup>). The second main normative theory is deontology (rights-based ethics) which, in its classical Kantian form, is based on the rational subject’s freedom to make logical decisions concerning his or her own destiny. Such rational, autonomous decisions may well not produce individual or collective happiness.

Both deontology and consequentialism capture important features of anarchism. The first emphasizes individual freedom (and the necessary principle of minimizing coercion) and the second a concern with social well-being.

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41 See, for example, C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1982); Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1993), 180–181; Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, 180, 216–217.

42 S. Newman, *The Politics of Postanarchism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 50–51; Newman, quoted in Rousselle, “Postanarchism and Its Critics,” 82.

43 J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 55.

However, whether taken individually or together (if it were possible to fully synthesize them) they are not sufficient. Consequentialism can be found in the works of thinkers as diverse as William Godwin, Johann Most, Bakunin, and Sergei Nechaev. Godwin, like the later Mill, prioritizes the promotion of higher pleasures in their various forms.<sup>44</sup> Both emphasize the protection of rights, although these are based on the hypothetical ground that they are the best guarantor of achieving socially desirable goals.<sup>45</sup> This suggests that rights may be violated where there is significant social benefit. Like Mill, Godwin's utilitarianism sometimes merges into a form of virtue theory,<sup>46</sup> as it stresses the development of a rounded and socially-located individual, rather than just a pleasure-seeking one. Most, by contrast, is more straightforwardly consequentialist:

Ethics? The end of revolution is freedom; the end justifies the means. The struggle for freedom is a war; wars are to be won and therefore to be waged with all energy, ruthlessly [...] using all there is to be used, including the latest in technology and the first of chemistry, to kill oppressors forthwith.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly Nechaev proposes a strict consequentialism:

The revolutionary is a dedicated man (*sic*). He has no interests of his own, no affairs, no feelings, no attachments, no belongings, not even a name. Everything in him is absorbed by a single passion—the revolution.

[...] He knows only one science, the science of destruction. To this end, and this end alone, he will study mechanics, physics, chemistry and medicine. [...] His sole and constant object is the immediate destruction of this vile order.<sup>48</sup>

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44 William Godwin, "Summary of Principles," in *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin*, 49–50.

45 Ibid., 50–52.

46 See Mill's discussions of higher pleasures and of the role of justice in *Utilitarianism*, 57–58 and 1051–1060.

47 F. Trautmann, *The Voice of Terror: A Biography of Johann Most* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 99.

48 Sergei Nechaev, *Catechism of the Revolutionist* (London: Violette Nozieres Press and Active Distribution, 1989), 4–5.

Despite important differences between Nechaev and Bakunin,<sup>49</sup> Nechaev's influence can be found in the latter's call for a strategic anarchism based on a unified, disciplined body able to create the singular event of a revolution.<sup>50</sup> However, strict consequentialism is criticized on many grounds, including by Bakunin. First, there is ontological doubt as to whether a single, universal goal exists and, if it does, whether it is discoverable. Secondly, such strict consequentialism can impact severely on the autonomy of the individual, reducing human subjects to mere instruments in the satisfaction of the grand plan. Third, as the quotation from Nechaev indicates, consequentialism damages the character of the individual: such instrumentalism reduces moral subjects to little more than coldly calculating machines. The consequentialist calculation is similar in form to capitalist exchange. It assesses (anti-) political tactics on the basis of whether resources invested in them are going to reap a suitable return over and against alternative actions. It is for these reasons that Nechaev's consequentialism is considered antithetical to the main forms of anarchism.<sup>51</sup>

Deontological ethics is the one most associated with the term "anarchism" in political and moral philosophy.<sup>52</sup> Philosophers such as Richard Dagger and Dudley Knowles have constructed "academically respectable" versions of anarchism based on deontological principles which are then contrasted with the supposedly irrationally violent social movement.<sup>53</sup> This narrow iteration of anarchism (known as "philosophical anarchism") holds a significant position in moral and political philosophy, being close to Nozickian liberalism.<sup>54</sup> It is based on one supreme principle: the autonomy of the rational individual. This requires an absolute avoidance of coercion and total respect for negative

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49 See P. Avrich, *Bakunin and Nechaev* (London: Freedom Press, 1987).

50 Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, trans. M. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 215–217.

51 See for instance Avrich, *Bakunin and Nechaev*, 28–30.

52 Thus Plekhanov writes in *Anarchism and Socialism*: "The morality of the Anarchists is that of persons who look upon all human action from the abstract point of view of the unlimited rights of the individual" (77).

53 R. Dagger, "Philosophical Anarchism and Its Fallacies: A Review Essay," *Philosophy and Law* 19, no. 3 (2000): 391–392; D. Knowles, *Political Philosophy*, 249.

54 Although there are differences, particular around Nozick's limited minimal state. See R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) and some of the essays in *Anarchism/Minarchism: Is a Government Part of a Free Country?* eds. R. Long and T. Machan (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2008).

rights. Some have modified this largely right-libertarian (or “propertarian”) account of anarchism to also include principles of equality.<sup>55</sup>

There are a number of problems with deontological accounts of anarchism. Even advocates accept that it is hard to conceive of societies where coercion is entirely absent.<sup>56</sup> Without an agreed external authority, as Jonathan Wolff notes, the philosophical anarchist relies solely on private judgment.<sup>57</sup> This leads to the problems previously noted regarding subjectivism, wherein there is no way of resolving disputes when the ultimate arbiter is individual conscience. The problem of conflicting judgments is resolved, at least initially, by claiming that anarchists hold a metaphysical belief in a benign human instinct. Without the distorting influence of malign state practice individuals would agree to the most cooperative solution.

Appeals to humanism or, indeed, any sort of essentialism, are inherently weak and open to all sorts of criticisms. One is epistemological: by what means can one derive a core, universal characteristic common to all humanity? Others are practical. If humans are essentially benign, as Wolff argues, then why do oppressive institutions like the state develop in the first place?<sup>58</sup> In light of these and other criticisms, the defense of anarchism fails and the theory can be easily refuted. Anarchists themselves understandably reject explanations such as Wolff’s. Instead, they recognize that humans have many conflicting instinctual drives<sup>59</sup> and that anarchism, whilst not necessarily incompatible with nature, is not naturally ordained.<sup>60</sup>

More standardly, deontological theories are viewed as inadequate by anarchists because they: (1) support and enhance inequalities; (2) have an inadequate account of freedom; (3) require hierarchical social institutions (whether a public or private enforcement agency); and (4) are based on a flawed account of human agency which corrupts social relationships.

Whilst anarchism is critical of hierarchies of economic, social, and political power, classical rights-based theorists consider economic inequalities to be desirable, since they provide incentives to greater productive endeavor,<sup>61</sup> either

55 See for instance A. Carter, “Analytical Anarchism: Some Conceptual Foundations,” *Political Theory* 28, no. 2 (2000): 230–253.

56 R. Wolff, *In Defense of Anarchism*, 82.

57 J. Wolff, *Introduction*, 46–47.

58 *Ibid.*, 29–30.

59 Peter Kropotkin, “Law and Authority: An Anarchist Essay” [1886], *Anarchy Archives*, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/kropotkin/lawauthority.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/kropotkin/lawauthority.html).

60 See, for example, E. Malatesta, “Peter Kropotkin: Recollections and Criticisms of an Old Friend,” in *Life and Ideas*, ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press 1984), 257–268.

61 J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).



else of no concern provided they are the result of just exchange.<sup>62</sup> Contractual arrangements tend to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities, which further undermines the social standing of the weaker and lessens their economic power and the representation of their interests within a market economy. Such inequalities can lead to slave-like circumstances in which the economically vulnerable have no choice but to comply with the demands of a monopolistic employer.<sup>63</sup>

Classical deontology argues that respect for rights allows parties to make consensual, mutually beneficial agreements. Such arrangements are the ideal form of freedom: "There is in the operation of the market no compulsion and coercion."<sup>64</sup> However, socialist critics point out that those in economically subservient relationships have no choice but to sell their labor to survive.<sup>65</sup> It is for this reason that the anarchist anthropologist David Graeber revives the notion of "wage-slavery."<sup>66</sup>

Deontological principles rest upon institutions for their enforcement and as such are antithetical to the anarchist rejection of hierarchical social structures. Liberal contracts are a social relationship between mutually competitive individuals primarily seeking their own individualized benefit regardless of the deleterious impact on either the other party to the contract or external groups. As such they differ from the "free agreements" favored by Kropotkin, which involve finding areas of enterprise that are mutually beneficial and thus require no enforcement.<sup>67</sup> Liberal contracts, by contrast, are based on agents seeking personal advantage and so require an apparatus of enforcement. For this reason, as social institutions have been increasingly structured on classical liberal norms, the state has not withdrawn, as proponents had argued, but become more significant because it is necessary in order to police such contracts.<sup>68</sup>

The underlying moral agent presumed in deontological theory is the abstract individual who is the sole owner of her body (as property) and private property. This is a flawed account of human agency. First, it is another essentialism and thus prone to the problems of a universal account of the

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62 Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.

63 This can be the case without any violation of just transfer. See K. DeClark, "Autonomy, Taxation and Ownership: An Anarchist Critique of Kant's Theory of Property," in Franks and Wilson, *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, 69–85.

64 L. von Mises, *Human Action* (London: Hodge, 1949), 258.

65 Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (Edmonton, Alta.: Black Cat, 2008), 196.

66 D. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2004), 70.

67 Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 199–200.

68 S. Harper *Beyond the Left: The Communist Critique of the Media* (London: Zero, 2012), 15–16.

individual as discussed above. Second, as Graham Baugh points out in reference to Bakunin's critique of liberalism, the account of agency is insufficient.<sup>69</sup> Lockean, Kantian, and Rousseauian individualisms are based on moral subjects abstracted from the social setting—that is agents, who have no shared concepts or language by which to enter into meaningful social practices or contracts. Such agents would be stranded in a “nihilistic desert.”<sup>70</sup> Thirdly, important social practices are damaged by being based on deontological norms. Reducing all relationships to transactional ones, as MacIntyre and Michael Sandel have argued, undermines solidarity and other important social virtues.<sup>71</sup> This position is shared by Bakunin and contemporary social anarchists, who also point to the “corrosive” impacts of individualism on practices based on cooperation, compassion, and camaraderie.<sup>72</sup>

Despite being portrayed as a theory that supremely privileges individual rights, anarchism's commitment to prefiguration results in a rejection of deontology, which privileges means over ends, as well as of consequentialism, which prioritizes ends over means. Prefigurative methods do not reject the importance of good outcomes but neither do they make methods solely instrumental to their achievement. Instead, prefiguration encourages tactics that embody, as far as possible, the values inherent in the goals. Ends are not fixed, but they are inherent in material, social practices.

Perfectionism and virtue theory, like prefiguration, recognize that social relationships contain internal goods as well generating external goods. For perfectionists these non-moral goods, like health, are also required for a flourishing individual and society,<sup>73</sup> whilst virtue theorists consider these non-moral goods to be resources for the generation and maintenance of virtues. Virtues are inter-personal attributes that are desirable in themselves and preferable to their opposites (so bravery is preferred over cowardice or rashness, generosity is favored over miserliness or being a spendthrift, etc.) but by developing and practicing relationships that embody these values they encourage the (re)production of other desirable social relationships. The generation

69 G. Baugh, “The Poverty of Autonomy: The Failure of Wolffs Defence of Anarchism,” in Roussopoulos, *The Anarchist Papers*, 107–121.

70 Ibid., 166–167.

71 See, for example, M. Sandel and S. Hoffman, “Markets, Morals, and Civil Life,” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 58, no. 4 (2005): 6–11; A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1984), x, 220–223.

72 Bakunin, *Political Philosophy*, 168–169; and I. McKay, ed., *An Anarchist FAQ*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2008), 339.

73 See S. Clark, “Kicking Against the Pricks: Anarchist Perfectionism and the Conditions of Independence,” in Franks and Wilson, *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, 35.

of virtues is likely to produce a flourishing individual and society. For radical virtue theory, the contestation of hierarchies is a vital feature of virtues (bravery, for instance involves standing up to a bully and not encouraging modes of domination, wisdom involves sharing rather than monopolizing knowledge, etc.). Anti-hierarchical relationships are a goal, and these forms of social relationship should be embodied in organizations and methods.<sup>74</sup>

Virtue theory has the advantage of including many of the key concerns of deontology and utilitarianism, but sees them as moderating, and being moderated by, other values, such as solidarity, liberality, and compassion, which embody anarchist anti-hierarchical commitments. Deontological principles of respecting the freedoms of others and fulfilling one's duties are consistent with virtues like integrity and justice, whilst utilitarian concern for the well-being of others is captured in virtues like compassion and generosity. The virtues act in unity. If someone is acting without wisdom or compassion, she is not demonstrating genuine bravery but rashness.

Whilst some virtue theorists are individualists, concentrating on individual self-improvement, other virtue theorists like the renegade MacIntyre and his "revolutionary Aristotelian" followers<sup>75</sup> prioritize the social, inter-personal character of the virtues. Virtues require social practices, which in turn are rule-governed activities that require resources and which produces shared goods, both internal and external. These rules are necessary for the practice to function, but do not necessarily require a centralized or fixed, hierarchical system of reward and punishment in order to operate. The principles that underpin that practice will change over time, though some may remain wholly stable. For instance, a competitive association football (or soccer) match requires materials such as pitch, goals, balls, and human labor (team-mates, competitors). It has shared discourses ("attack," "formation"), rules (governing foul play and legitimate sanctions), identities ("team-mates," "opponents," "spectators"), and its own internal goods (such as camaraderie, physical bravery and athleticism). Practices develop over time into traditions, and different attributes are prioritized in different locations: in Scottish football, for example, hard tackling is considered a core attribute, while in Catalan football ball control is privileged over aggressive play. However, the main norms remain central to both, as do many of the internal goods and the key concepts. There are shared characteristics which make the game comprehensible to practitioners from

74 James Guillaume, quoted in Mikhail Bakunin, *Marxism, Freedom and the State*, trans. K.J. Kenafick (London: Freedom Press, 1984), 7.

75 See, for example, many of the papers in *Revolutionary Aristotelianism: Ethics, Resistance, and Utopia*, eds. K. Knight and P. Blackledge (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius, 2008).

different cultures, though it would be incomprehensible to someone from the same culture who only knew only ice-hockey or American football.

At the same time, virtue-rich social practices can become corrupted. MacIntyre, consistent with anarchist critiques of capitalism, explains how virtuous social activities become undermined. First is when entrants into a practice become more concerned with achieving external goods rather than maintaining the activity's internal goods: for example, when people only play football in order to gain the prize money that comes from winning the game. Here the practitioner may cheat or use other forms of gamesmanship (such as abusing opponents) to try to gain an unfair advantage, which undermines the game's internal goods, discourages future participants, and fosters instrumental interactions.<sup>76</sup> When external goods are prioritized, the internal goods of a productive practice are necessarily marginalized. Kropotkin, for example, points to the ways in which the drive for efficient production undermines important social and aesthetic values and creates great harms.<sup>77</sup>

Social practices become corrupted when inappropriate goods are imposed onto a practice, or when external goods are given supreme priority over internal goods, or a single value (usually exchange value) takes absolute precedence over all other values. Managerialism and neo-liberalism are associated with just corruption. Because different practices have different constellations of virtues, distinctive rules, and discourses, practitioners (and those in adjacent disciplines) are usually best positioned to understand how to conduct a practice. Bakunin, in his famous discussion on what constitutes just authority, explains that while there is legitimate authority of knowledge, both practical and theoretical, no one could have total knowledge. The authority of knowledge is limited and contextual: "Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination."<sup>78</sup> Where there is management external to the practice, autonomy is reduced and the virtues are undermined; where practitioners remain in control of their activity, virtues continue to flourish.

Continual exposure to corrupt practices degrades those who undertake them. This leads to a problem identified by the heterodox Marxist David Harvey: if dehumanizing, hierarchical behaviors are pervasive, how is it possible to rediscover humane ways of living?<sup>79</sup> Harvey's answer is that one must confront vicious practices. Anarchists like Bookchin and the Trapeze Collective

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76 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 192–193.

77 Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, 1–3, 92–93.

78 Bakunin, *God and The State*, 30.

79 Harvey, *The Promise of Revolutionary Humanism*, columns 3–4.

agree, but they also stress than in contesting these practices the modes of opposition used by the oppressed must embody, as far as possible, the humane social relations they wish to see realized in a liberated society.<sup>80</sup>

Whilst a radical virtue theory is, I argue, the form of ethics most consistent with anarchism's commitment to anti-hierarchical, prefigurative social relationships to generate mutual social goods, this is not to say that it is overtly recognized as such by anarchists themselves even though there is a pervasive use of virtue terminology in the evaluation of their own tactics as well as the political strategies of their opponents. Even within the pages of *325 Magazine*, which purportedly targets "civil anarchism" and promotes "amoralism," the failings of its opponents are analyzed in terms of cowardice, exclusionary elitism and lack of solidarity, and integrity:<sup>81</sup> values which are social and practice-dependent. Social anarchists also use a wide variety of concepts drawn from virtue theory: When they discuss the joys of urban insurrection, Class War also highlight how the rediscovery of the power of the oppressed can be used to foster solidarity, anti-hierarchy and "new ways of relating to one another."<sup>82</sup> Likewise Malatesta stresses that the appropriate anarchist agent is one that is passionate about the welfare of others as well as himself, but such passion must also be tempered by wisdom. Inappropriate anarchist acts—and here Malatesta is referring to certain spectacular incidents of propaganda by deed—lack self-discipline and carefulness even when they are inspired by right principle.<sup>83</sup>

In some arenas, because of particularly extensive and powerful forms of domination, all social practices are at risk of being corrupted. It is not surprising in these circumstances if activists are more concerned with resisting this form of oppression. Thus, there can be locations in which the concentration is on one particular form of resistance, which is accompanied by a singular ethical discourse. In the late 1940s and 1950s, with the intensification of the Cold War, some anarchists prioritized discourses based on "individual freedom" since it seemed as though social practices which included respect for individual sovereignty were most under threat by Soviet Marxism, on one hand,

80 Ibid. See also Bookchin, "Anarchism," 146, Trapese Collective, *Do it Yourself* (London: Pluto, 2007), 1–9.

81 DMP, introduction to *Anarchy: Civil or Subversive*, 3, 5–6.

82 Class War, *A Decade of Disorder* (London: Verso, 1991), 47. See too the Anarchist Federation which, in its account of international resistance to hierarchical governance, discusses Min, a female Chinese worker in order to highlight her appropriate self-regard and ingenuity: Anarchist Federation, "Made in China: Gender and Resistance in the 'Factory of the World,'" *Angry Women Win: Resistance Special* (2014), 9, <http://afed.org.uk/res/resist157.pdf>.

83 Errico Malatesta, "Pensiero e Volanta," in *Anarchism and Violence* (Johannesburg: Zabalaza, n.d.), 8.

and the statist, militarized democracies, on the other. The problem is that if a particular value (and corresponding single moral agent) is taken as universal, then this undermines other values and damages social practices based on these plural goods.

A range of ethical theories (normative and meta-ethical) can be found within anarchism. However, it is the revolutionary Aristotelian tradition of virtue theory that appears to be most consistent with the main analyses and practices of anarchism. Radical virtue theory starts with a materialist interest in social practices which generate internal and external goods, and thus prefigure wider benevolent social practices. Virtues, because they work in unity, are antipathetic to hierarchy, as social relationships based on domination generate vices such as callousness, brutality, and injustice. Virtues are multiple; they are not reducible to a single, supreme value. To this extent virtue theory, like anarchism, is critical of capitalism, which prioritizes a single (exchange) value.

The existence and persistence of a range of ethical stances within anarchism has a number of positive features. It encourages internal critique of existing practices and promotes dialogue amongst activists. Deontological anarchists will remind others of their shared commitments to liberty, whilst utilitarian interventions restrain socially negligent behavior. The shared interest in ethics, even from rival traditions, nevertheless demonstrates a mutual concern with the interests of others, even if there is disagreement on who “the others” are, as well as with which interests take priority. The language of moral discussion nevertheless provides one method (amongst others) for fruitful engagement and collaboration. Amoralist interventions, despite their weaknesses, nevertheless encourage reflection on the emergence of evaluative principles and the recognition that ethical discourse is not the sole language for collective action.

### Applied Ethics

There are a number of major areas where anarchist ethical principles have been a significant (albeit minor) current in professional debates. Anarchist influence on pedagogy, for example, has been well-documented,<sup>84</sup> and anarchist interest in the micro-dynamics of political organization has been subject to systematic analysis, both historically and with the rise of social movements

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84 See, for example, J. Spring, *Wheels in the Head*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2007); J. Suissa, *Anarchism and Education: A Philosophical Investigation* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010).

like Occupy.<sup>85</sup> Whilst Occupy is diverse and many of its manifestations were not explicitly anarchist, these protest groups embodied many anarchist concerns with non-hierarchical social organization.<sup>86</sup> Within explicitly anarchist organizations there have been debates around the use of tactics: those concerning violence and animal vivisection have had particularly significant exposure. More recently, such diverse private and public activities as business practices<sup>87</sup> and gardening<sup>88</sup> have been subject to anarchist analysis and intervention. Similarly, a long-running concern of anarchists—that of freedom of speech versus protection of minorities from abusive or apparently abusive speech-acts—remains contentious.

There is insufficient space to deal adequately with any significant applied ethical dilemma. Instead, this section provides a general anarchist approach to applied ethical analysis and its critique of standard analytical methods. Much standard applied ethics involves clarifying and assessing regulations or norms promoted and/or enforced by state or quasi-state authorities, and the responsibilities of, and duties to, the individual.<sup>89</sup> A necessary feature of legislative guidance is that it provides an authoritative basis for decisions across all social domains within a specific geographical region (referred to as “universal”). For universally applicable legislation, there has to be a singular definition, or formula for the generation of definitions, which can identify and interpret these norms, hence the analytic tradition’s concentration on conceptual clarification.

Anarchist applied ethics, by contrast, argues that there is no single method of study or interpretation that can authoritatively and accurately identify, categorize, and evaluate all concepts outside of the social practices within which they arise. Universal definitions, anarchists argue, are almost certain to

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85 See, for example, D. Graeber, “Occupy and Anarchism’s Gift of Democracy,” *The Guardian*, 15 Nov. 15 2011, [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/53317/1/Graber\\_Occupy\\_anarchism's\\_democracy\\_2013.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/53317/1/Graber_Occupy_anarchism's_democracy_2013.pdf); M. Gibson, “The Anarchism of the Occupy Movement,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 3 (2013): 335–348; M. Bray, *Translating Anarchy: The Anarchism of Occupy Wall Street* (Winchester, U.K.: Zero, 2013).

86 Bray, *Translating Anarchy*, 42–43.

87 See *Ephemera* vol. 14, no. 4 (2014), Special Issue on Management, Business, Anarchism.

88 S. Yuill *spring\_alpha:diggers*, *Scottish Arts*, 2007, <http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/l/artsin-scotland/visualarts/projects/projects%20archive/simonyuill.aspx>.

89 Whilst “social policy” starts by being described in general terms, as the intersection of social practices and relationships develops to enhance well-being, the description soon shifts to central administration of these relationships and institutions. See, for example, H. Dean, *Social Policy* (London: Polity, 2012), 1–5. Michael Hill makes the link between central authority and social policy more explicit. See, for example, his *Understanding Social Policy*, 7th edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

be defective and likely to damage diverse, irreducible social practices. Rather than concentrate on conceptual clarification, or emphasize the development of universal rules (such as those based on Lockean property rights) for dealing with social problems, the concentration shifts to a more micropolitical analysis of power and identity. An anarchist method explores specific activities from the perspective of the practitioners and those affected by the practice; it does not assume that there is an objective position from which to make a universally valid judgment. This method identifies the power relationships within and between those participating in or subject to the social activity and the connections and disjunctions between one practice and adjacent practices. It might also refer to the subject position of those making the judgments. This method identifies how affirming or reducing particular features of these rule-governed activities (a shift of resources, a tweaking of the norms) might assist in the further generation of social goods. It would also explore how hierarchical impositions, whether state-, capital- or patriarchal-centered, can disrupt or corrupt social practices.

Rather than a universalist, legislative approach, anarchists argue for one which is epistemologically and strategically more modest. Here, practitioners and participants identify the particular norms, resources, identities, and immanent goods (and harms) within particular traditions. Practitioners rather than legislators should take the lead in protecting their virtuous practices from discriminatory and hierarchical interference. This does not necessarily rule out some manipulation and use of social power against coercive and abusive behavior, but in countering these threats, the methods used should also encapsulate the virtues, such as bravery, justice, compassion, and modesty.

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided both an overview and an analysis of anarchist perspectives on meta-ethics, normative (and situated) ethics, and applied ethics. Distinctive meta-ethical and normative positions help shape, and are shaped by, the different constellations of anarchism. Thus egoist and certain post-anarchist formations support and are structured by subjectivist and nihilist positions, whilst some individualist anarchisms develop principles and practices consistent with liberal deontology. In addition to providing a survey, however, this contribution also argues for an account of anarchist ethics that is materialist, but not determinist or universalist, and which is consistent with revolutionary Aristotelianism. It recognizes that values are generated in material social practices. These values are vital to the continuation of these practices, but adapt over



time. As social practices differ, different values take precedence, and indeed can be discovered or produced. Such a flexible, non-universalist account is consistent with the prefigurative principles and non-universalist epistemologies that are core to anarchism.

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# Anarchism and Nationalism

Uri Gordon

## Introduction

Anarchists are against nationalism; everyone knows that. Instead of solidarity across borders and anti-hierarchical antagonism within them, nationalism engenders loyalty to the state with its armed forces and public symbols, encourages the oppressed to identify with their compatriot oppressors, scapegoats minorities, and pits workers of different countries against one another in economic competition or open warfare. Opposition to nationalism is an almost trivial starting point for anarchist politics, reflected in antimilitarist actions, antifascism, and migrant solidarity to name a few. Besides, if anarchism “stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals,”<sup>1</sup> then anarchists can only reject the proposition that individuals owe their loyalty to a pre-existing collective of millions of strangers into which they never chose to be born. Notwithstanding the open anti-Semitism of Proudhon<sup>2</sup> and Bakunin,<sup>3</sup> or the anti-German prejudices of Bakunin<sup>4</sup> and Kropotkin<sup>5</sup> (attitudes that were rooted in personal bigotry rather than anarchist ideology as such) anarchists have consistently aspired to bring about the end of nations and nationalisms alongside all other forms of domination.

So much for the propaganda line. This chapter, however, seeks to elaborate some philosophical questions that arise, not from the anarchist opposition to national chauvinism as such, but from the engagement with race and

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- 1 E. Goldman, “Anarchism: What It Really Stands For,” in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969), 62.
  - 2 P.-J. Proudhon, *Carnets de Proudhon*, ed. M. Rivière (Paris: Pierre Haubtmann, 1961), 2: 337–338.
  - 3 M. Bakunin, “Letter to Albert Richard” [1870], trans. S. Wilbur, *Bakunin Library*, <https://blog.bakuninlibrary.org/letter-to-albert-richard-april-1-1870/>. See also M. Shatz, introduction to M. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, ed. and trans. M. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xxx. Cf. E. Eiglad, “Anti-Zionism and the Anarchist Tradition,” in *Deciphering the New Antisemitism*, ed. A. Rosenfeld (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2015), 206–241.
  - 4 Shatz, Introduction to *Statism and Anarchy*, xxi, xxiv–xxx.
  - 5 R. Kinna, “Kropotkin’s Theory of Mutual Aid in Historical Context,” *International Review of Social History* 40, no. 2 (1995): 261–264.

ethnocultural identity more broadly. Unlike the anarchist concept of the nation as a state construct, the idea of a group identity extending from immediate kinship through common ancestry and mediated through language and culture survives the critique of nationalism. Yet this idea brings out very sharply the tension between the deconstructive impulse of anarchist thought and the demands of decolonial solidarity within the anarchist movement. On the one hand, while some anarchists have adopted a naturalist understanding of “peoples” as constituents of the human race, others have explicitly sought to problematize ethnocultural identity—either by dismissing it in favor of class or, more interestingly, by deconstructing claims to ethnic and linguistic continuity and affinity. Apart from its poststructuralist attractions, the move to deconstruct ethnocultural peoplehood remains an appealing in the critique of ethno-nationalist state ideologies as well as in confrontations with the far right.

On the other hand, ethnocultural identity is central to movements in which anarchists are participants or accomplices, from indigenous and black liberation in North America to national liberation movements in Chiapas, Palestine, and Rojava. In this context, does the deconstructive impulse not risk attacking the very particularisms that make claims on anarchists’ solidarities? Are appeals to ethnocultural identity subject to deconstructive critique selectively, on a friend-or-foe basis? Or is this an inevitable disjuncture of theory and practice which can only be approached as a record of the social antinomies that underlie it, and resolved through their eventual transformation? My central argument here is that the deconstructive impulse towards ethnocultural (and gender, and other) identity is valuable and should be sustained; nevertheless, a principle of subsidiarity should be applied to its deployment. This creates an ethical filter which takes personal stakes and asymmetries of power into account in the practice of anarchist philosophy. By setting up the discussion in these terms, I am using the lens of nationalism to read between theoretical and political commitments and to suggest a new starting point for discussions of decolonial solidarity.

I begin by briefly highlighting the anarchist movement’s transnational composition and its differing responses to national liberation movements as contexts for the debate. Starting with the traditional anarchist critique of the nation as a state construct (as opposed to the idea of peoples), I then identify three different approaches to the role of ethnicity in collective identity. These are naturalist approach (which sees specific peoples as part of a human family); the class-centric approach (which dismisses ethnocultural identity); and the culturalist approach. The latter, expressed most fully by Rudolf Rocker, deepens the attack on nationalism by systematically undermining the stability and significance of kinship and language as foundations for the peoplehood

that nationalism claims to own. Reviewing the decolonial critique of universalism as applied to the former two approaches, I argue that the latter's anti-foundationalist impulse may also run afoul the particularisms that ally with anarchism in decolonial struggles. If the anarchist ethic of recognition entails *prima facie* acceptance of oppressed people's—and peoples'—own articulation of their identities and goals, then deconstruction may disrupt the balance between conceptual coherence and political solidarities. As a proposed resolution, I suggest an ethics of deconstruction informed by attention to positionality and the principle of subsidiarity. I close with a comment on decolonizing bioregionalism.

### Nation, People, Class, and Culture

Anarchist engagements with nationalism were influenced by the movement's own transnational composition and cosmopolitan ethos.<sup>6</sup> Anarchism developed from the start across borders, marked by “supranational connections and multidirectional flows of ... ideas, people, finances and organizational structures ... often built upon migratory diasporas and ... reinforced by the movement's press and the travels of major activists.”<sup>7</sup> The commonplace Eurocentric view notwithstanding, anarchists were active in Argentina, Cuba, and Egypt as early as the 1870s, whereas the first two decades of the 20th century saw sophisticated anarchist movements emerge from the Philippines, Peru, and Japan to South Africa, Chile, and Turkey.<sup>8</sup> In Britain and in North and South America, the influx of Jewish, Italian, and Irish immigrants created multicultural working class communities in which a radical cosmopolitan outlook took hold,

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6 C. Bantman, *The French Anarchists in London, 1880–1914: Exile and Transnationalism in the First Globalisation* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013); C. Levy, “Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 16, no. 3 (2011): 265–278.

7 S. Hirsch and L. van der Walt, eds., *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1880–1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), xxxii.

8 B. Anderson, *Under Three Flags. Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2005); I. Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2010); M. Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism: An Antiauthoritarian History of India's Liberation Struggle* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2011); K. Shaffer, “Havana Hub: Cuban Anarchism, Radical Media and the Trans-Caribbean Anarchism Network, 1902–1915,” *Caribbean Studies* 37, no. 2 (2009): 45–81; D. Turcato, “Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915,” *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 3 (2007): 407–444.

embracing diversity and solidarity across ethnic and cultural lines.<sup>9</sup> These transnational encounters continue to animate the anarchist movement today.<sup>10</sup>

Anarchists were also early and consistent opponents of racism and slavery. Joseph Déjacque, an early French anarchist active in New Orleans in the 1850s, looked forward to a revolutionary alliance between black slaves and white proletarians, and favorably compared John Brown to Spartacus. He expected that the “monstrous American Union, the fossil Republic, will disappear” in the cataclysm of revolution, creating a “Social Republic” wherein “Blacks and whites, creoles and redskins will fraternize ... and will found one single race. The killers of Negroes and proletarians, the amphibians of liberalism and the carnivores of privilege will withdraw like the caymans ... to the most remote parts of the bayous.”<sup>11</sup> Later, at the height of lynching murders in the American South, the anarchist James F. Morton wrote an extensive pamphlet against racism and its use to dehumanize and justify atrocities. “The blind stupidity of racial prejudice is simply unfathomable,” he wrote, “it acts in mad disregard of all logical considerations, and when challenged can give no coherent account of itself ... it stops its ears in blind rage.”<sup>12</sup>

As part of his critique of nationalism and militarism, Jean Grave disparaged both the irrationality of notions of racial and cultural superiority as well as their insidious role in causing workers to legitimate their own exploitation.<sup>13</sup> In *Moribund Society and Anarchy* (1899) he strongly condemned colonization as robbery and murder writ large, poured derision its claims to be a “civilizing” force, and supported the revolts of colonized peoples.<sup>14</sup> In a chapter titled “There are no inferior races,” he repudiates a series of then-common arguments

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- 9 W.J. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875–1914* (Nottingham, U.K.: Five Leaves Press, 2005); D. Katz, *All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); J. Moya, “The Positive Side of Stereotypes: Jewish Anarchists in Early Twentieth-century Buenos Aires,” *Jewish History* 18, no. 1 (2004): 19–48; K. Zimmer, *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
  - 10 M. Cuevas Hewitt, “Sketching Towards an Archipelagic Poetics of Postcolonial Belonging,” *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* 11, no. 1 (2007): 239–246; S. Kalicha and G. Kuhn, eds., *Von Jakarta bis Johannesburg: Anarchismus weltweit* (Berlin: Unrast, 2010).
  - 11 J. Déjacque, *The Humanisphère: Anarchic Utopia* [1858], trans. S. Wilbur, *Working Translations*, <http://bit.ly/236ooxx>.
  - 12 J.F. Morton, *The Curse of Race Prejudice* (New York: J.F. Morton, 1906), 31. Cf. G. Damiani, *Razzismo e anarchismo* (Newark, N.J.: Biblioteca de l'Adunata dei refrattari, 1939).
  - 13 J. Grave, *Moribund Society and Anarchy*, trans. v. De Cleyre (San Francisco: Free Society Library, 1899), 76–80, 102–111.
  - 14 *Ibid.*, 95–102.



about the inferiority of non-Europeans and draws a parallel between racism and the self-serving bourgeois designation of the poor as inherently inferior.<sup>15</sup>

Another important context for anarchist responses to nationalism has been the engagement with national liberation movements. On the one hand, Proudhon and Bakunin both opposed the Polish insurrection, which despite significant differences of approach they both saw as an elite-led effort that sidestepped the social question and threatened to embolden either French or Prussian expansionism.<sup>16</sup> Others, however, offered support to the liberation struggles of peoples under foreign rule within the context of a revolutionary project to abolish domination and the institutions that maintain it. Landauer supported the wars of “revolutionary peoples” against foreign oppression, while building “solidarity among all peoples in struggle against war and the state.”<sup>17</sup> Earlier, Kropotkin argued that the removal of foreign domination was a precondition to social revolution and supported the national liberation of “the Armenians in Turkey, the Finns and Poles in Russia” as well as “the blacks in America,” whose situation he considered equivalent to foreign occupation.<sup>18</sup> For Kropotkin, genuine internationalism had to oppose imperialism and to “proclaim the complete liberty of each nation, however small it might be, and its absolute right to develop along the lines it wished, while anarchists supporting national liberation struggles should aim to “enlarge the meaning of their revolt [and] raise up among them a flag which represents a superior ideal.”<sup>19</sup>

In the later 20th century, anarchists distanced themselves from Marxists’ often uncritical championing of centralizing states in the former colonies of Africa and south Asia. In the Algerian context, “French anarchists like Camus, Joyeux, Guérin, and those in *Noir et Rouge*, openly criticized actions and orientations of the FLN while also supporting the principle of ending colonial rule [and] Algerian autogestion.”<sup>20</sup> More recently, Hakim Bey has drawn attention to new national liberation movements which are “both non-hegemonic and anti-Capitalist,” including Kurdish, Sahrawi, Hawaiian, and Puerto Rican movements,

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15 Ibid., 102–111.

16 M. Kofman, “The Reaction of Two Anarchists to Nationalism: Proudhon and Bakunin on the Polish Question,” *Labor History* 14 (1968): 34–45.

17 G. Landauer, “Revolution, Nation and War,” in *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, ed. G. Kuhn (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010), 232.

18 P. Kropotkin, “Letter to Maria Isidine Goldsmith,” in *The Direct Struggle Against Capital: A Peter Kropotkin Anthology*, ed. I. McKay (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2014), 140.

19 Quoted in J.C. Cahm, *Socialism and Nationalism*, vol. 1, eds., E. Cahm and V.C. Fišera (Nottingham, U.K.: Spokesman, 1978), 56.

20 D. Porter, *Eyes to the South: French Anarchists and Algeria* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2011), 487.

those seeking “maximum autonomy for Native-american ‘nations,’” the Mexican Zapatistas, and “at least in theory the bioregionalist movement in the U.S.”<sup>21</sup>

In all of these responses to nationalism, a distinction has prevailed between “the nation” understood as an artificial entity constructed by the state, and terms like “nationalities,” “peoples,” “folks,” and “races,” which were either construed as factual entities or themselves subject to destabilizing critique. Nationalism, in this context, is defined and rejected as an ideology of loyalty to an existing nation state.<sup>22</sup> Rudolf Rocker’s central argument in *Nationalism and Culture* was that nationalism had replaced religion in the modern era as the chief ideological tool of legitimation for the ruling classes. The nation “is not the cause, but the result of the state. It is the state that creates the nation” which is “the artificial result of the struggle for political power, just as nationalism has never been anything but the political religion of the modern state.”<sup>23</sup> As for ethnocultural identity and peoplehood, we can distinguish between three approaches. I will call these the naturalist, classist, and culturalist approaches.

A naturalist approach sees peoples as factual entities rooted in common geographical, cultural, linguistic and/or ancestral features. For Bakunin, the homeland (*patria*) represented a “manner of living and feeling” which is “always an incontestable result of a long historic development.”<sup>24</sup> Love of homeland among the “common people ... is a natural, real love” while “political patriotism, or love of the State, is not [its] faithful expression” but one “distorted by means of false abstraction, always for the benefit of an exploiting minority.”<sup>25</sup> In his article on the rising Finnish nationalism, Kropotkin emphasized alongside heritage and language the role of “union between the people and the territory it occupies, from which territory it receives its national character and on which it impresses its own stamp, so as to make an indivisible whole both men and territory.”<sup>26</sup> While opposed to the nationalism promoted by existing states, Kropotkin continued to regard the human race as composed of more or less

21 H. Bey, *Millenium* (New York: Autonomedia, 1996), 49.

22 Cf. E. Goldman, “Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty,” in *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 127–144; L. Tolstoy, “Patriotism and Government,” in L. Tolstoy, *Government is Violence: Essays on Anarchism and Pacifism*, ed. D. Stephens (London: Phoenix Press, 1990), 77–92.

23 R. Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, trans. R. Chase (New York: Covici Friede, 1937), 200–201.

24 M. Bakunin, “A Circular Letter to my Friends in Italy,” in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, ed. G.P. Maximoff (London: Free Press, 1953), 324.

25 Ibid.; cf. Cahm, *Socialism and Nationalism*, 33–41.

26 P. Kropotkin, “Finland: A Rising Nationality,” *The Nineteenth Century* 27, no. 97 (Mar. 1885): 527–546.

territorially-defined ethnocultural groups, while celebrating diversity in the “international family” and seeking “to develop local, individual characteristics.”<sup>27</sup> Such an approach, while positively encouraging cultural diversity, sets up a continuum leading from the individual through the ethno-cultural group and on to the human species. As Jean Grave writes in a similar vein:

Certainly we do not want to assert that all races are absolutely identical; but we are persuaded that all have certain aptitudes, certain moral, intellectual, and physical qualities, which, had they been allowed to evolve freely, would have enabled them to take their part in the labor of human civilization.<sup>28</sup>

The naturalist approach is thus often grounded in a universalist, humanist ethics—the “belief in the shared humanity of people regardless of their membership in different cultural, ethnic and gender groups, and their complementary affinities in a free society as rational human beings.”<sup>29</sup>

A second approach denies ethnocultural identity any validity as a political point of reference, supplanting it with class. Though not very prevalent in the anarchist tradition, it has more recently been heard from self-identified “class struggle anarchists”. Schmidt and van der Walt, who see ethnicity (as well as gender) as theoretically subsidiary to class, place nationalism and ethnocultural identity on par with “identity politics,” the latter construed as necessarily essentialist and fragmentary. Instead, they promote the unifying potential of “class politics” which can mobilize “ordinary people ... across racial lines.”<sup>30</sup> Here, race or ethnicity are accorded an entirely negative function, rejecting the loyalties they imply as false consciousness and refusing to see the power relations they encode as constitutive. In the context of Palestine, this approach often leads to statements about the “real interests” of “the proletariat of Gaza and the West Bank,” which lie not in self-determination within the existing system but “in combining with workers everywhere to end all exploitation.”<sup>31</sup>

27 Quoted in Cahm, *Socialism and Nationalism*, 53; cf. Kropotkin, “Letter to Maria Isidine Goldsmith.”

28 Grave, *Moribund Society and Anarchy*, 108–109.

29 M. Bookchin, “Nationalism and the National Question,” *Democracy and Nature* 2, no. 2 (1994), [http://www.democracynature.org/vol2/bookchin\\_nationalism.htm#\\_ednref7](http://www.democracynature.org/vol2/bookchin_nationalism.htm#_ednref7).

30 M. Schmidt and L. van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2009), 305.

31 “Nationalism and National Liberation,” *The Free Communist* 7 (2015), 1; cf. Solidarity Federation, “Human Rights-Yes: State of Palestine: No,” *Direct Action* 23 (2002), [http://www.directa.force9.co.uk/backissues/DA\\_23/regulars2.htm](http://www.directa.force9.co.uk/backissues/DA_23/regulars2.htm); R.C. McCarthy, “Anarchists

A more rarefied variation of classism appears in Alfredo Bonanno's essay on national liberation. Bonanno argues that "anarchists refuse to participate in national liberation fronts; they participate in class fronts which may or may not be involved in national liberation struggles."<sup>32</sup> In doing so, he adopts the premise of the *Fronte Liberaire* that "ethnic culture is class culture, and for this reason is revolutionary culture."<sup>33</sup> Therefore:

The ethnic base of today consists of the whole of the exploited people who live in a given territory of a given nation, there being no common ethnic base between exploiter and exploited. It is logical that this class basis will be destroyed along with the destruction of the political state, where the ethnic limit will no longer coincide with the exploited ... but with the whole of the men and women living in that territory who have chosen to live their lives freely.<sup>34</sup>

Bonanno goes beyond a rejection of ethnicity as identity—the concept is instead ontologically absorbed into class. The logic proceeds through the recursive application of a specific account of revolutionary accomplishment to pre-revolutionary conditions. Since it is only class consciousness that can define a post-capitalist reconstruction of territorially-bound populations, the "ethnic limit of the revolutionary process of free federations" corresponds to that of a proletariat in the process of self-abolition.<sup>35</sup> Aside from the blatant mystification of identifying class with ethnicity, this formulation cannot account for realities such as ethnic divisions *within* exploited populations, as seen both in colonial circumstances and in the multiethnic global north.

The third, culturalist approach is also critical, but instead of supplanting ethnic identity with class, it destabilizes appeals to common kinship, language, and heritage as constitutive of human groups. What remains is an effectively anti-foundationalist concept of folk culture, identified with localized patterns of human interaction which remain in flux as they relay populations, practices,

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and Palestine: Class Struggle or Popular Front?" *NEFAC*, 2002, <http://makhno.nefac.net/html/drupal/?q=node/view/158>; Anarchist Communist Initiative, "Two States for Two People-Two States Too Many," in *Anarchists Against the Wall: Direct Action and Solidarity with the Palestinian Popular Struggle*, eds. U. Gordon and O. Grietzer (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2013), 22–26.

32 A. Bonanno, *Anarchism and the National Liberation Struggle* (London: Elephant Editions, 1976), 16.

33 *Ibid.*, 15.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, 13.

and ideas. This approach is present already in Gustav Landauer's account of the folk, which is in fact constructed in complete detachment from ethnocultural signifiers. As Grauer points out, Landauer perceived the folk "not as a political or economic structure, and definitely not as a biological entity determined by fixed and unalterable blood ties ... [N]either a common language nor a measure of geographical unity" were necessary features of folk spirit.<sup>36</sup> Landauer's mythical folk is a spiritual entity, "an equality of individuals—a feeling and reality—which is brought about in free spirit to unity and to union."<sup>37</sup> Anarchic *a priori*, this subaltern free culture exists underneath and as-against hierarchical social relations. The organic and free unfolding of spirit among the people is contrasted to the mechanistic and compulsive state, and poised to replace it with voluntarism and mutual aid. The absence of ethnocultural references in Landauer's account of the folk is important in allowing his organicism to resist identification with the Volkisch right. But the result is a concept of the folk clearly removed from any naturalist presumption of an ethnocultural basis for peoplehood.

Rudolf Rocker is more explicit. In the first part of *Nationalism and Culture* he is concerned with a historical and ideological critique of the modern nation state, and in this context sets up the distinction between the nation and the people in familiar naturalist terms:

A people is the natural result of social union, a mutual association of men [*sic*] brought about by a certain similarity of external conditions of living, a common language, and special characteristics due to climate and geographic environment. In this manner arise common traits, alive in every member of the union, and forming a most important part of its social existence.<sup>38</sup>

Yet this formulation is misleading, since in the second part of the book Rocker reboots the critique of nationalism, extending it to an attack on the stability and significance of language and ethnic ties. While the primary aim is to attack nationalism at its base assumptions, Rocker's critique ends up destabilizing the naturalist account of peoplehood as well. After demonstrating that there is no "community of material interest and identity of morals, customs

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36 M. Grauer, "Anarcho-Nationalism: Anarchist Attitudes Towards Jewish Nationalism and Zionism," *Modern Judaism* 14, no. 1 (1994): 6.

37 Ibid.

38 Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, 200–201.

and traditions”<sup>39</sup> within existing nations, Rocker turns to language. Describing many borrowings and loan-translations among European and middle-eastern languages, and cases of populations changing their language, he concludes that “language is not the result of a special folk-unity. It is a structure in constant change ... always in flux, protean in its inexhaustible power to assume new forms.”<sup>40</sup> It is thus “no characteristic of a nation: it is even not always decisive of membership in a particular nation. Every language is permeated with a mass of foreign speech elements in which the mode of thought and the intellectual culture of other peoples lives.”<sup>41</sup>

Rocker’s chapter on race, written in the shadow of Nazism, is largely concerned with the baselessness of “scientific” racism. Yet in introducing this critique he points beyond the mere rejection of racial supremacism to a questioning of ethnocultural distinctiveness in itself. Not only is there no connection between “mental, moral and cultural qualities” and the “real or imaginary physical characteristics of a race,”<sup>42</sup> but these characteristics—like language—are themselves the result of populations mixing and migrating. As a result there are no “pure races,” not even “among the so-called savage peoples” such as “the Eskimos or the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego ... [R]ace does not describe something fixed and unchangeable, but something in a perpetual state of flux, something continually being made over.”<sup>43</sup>

We will return to the comment on indigenous people later on. For the moment, it should be noted that with his emphasis on flux and change, Rocker is seeking to excise any stable ethnic characteristics from his cultural account of peoplehood. Peoples are, in this sense, local snapshots of a worldwide process of cultural unfolding, which at once displays “endless diversity” and is everywhere driven by “the aspiration for worthier organization and loftier spirit in social and individual life that is deeply rooted in the social sentiment of man.”<sup>44</sup> Rocker’s concept of culture thus relies on the opposite of isolation and self-containment:

Cultural reconstructions and social stimulation always occur when different peoples and races come into closer union. Every new culture is begun by such a fusion of different folk elements and takes its special

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39 Ibid., 275.

40 Ibid., 288.

41 Ibid., 297.

42 Ibid., 298.

43 Ibid., 301.

44 Ibid., 345.

shape from this ... a culture is born or fertilized only by the circulation of new blood in the veins of its representatives ... In all the great epochs, culture has marched hand in hand with the voluntary union and fusion of different human groups.<sup>45</sup>

I would like to argue that Rocker approaches an anti-foundationalist position in his deconstruction of language and race as anchors for nationalism as well as in his preference for flux and mutability in the cultural conception of peoplehood. In opting for an ontological rather than normative critique of nationalism, his approach bears the mark of the negating, conceptually nihilistic impulse which runs through the anarchist tradition, from Stirner's iconoclasm and Bakunin's "destructive urge" to Goldman's calls for a transvaluation of social mores. This impulse has sustained anarchism's critical edge and experimental approach to social reconstruction, and marks it as a forerunner of poststructuralist thought.<sup>46</sup> To be sure, Rocker does not deconstruct all the way—he still finds "the essential and universal which unite all human beings"<sup>47</sup> in the aspiration to culture as such. Yet this is a very thin universalism which leaves the substantive content of cultural articulation open and inherently mutable. Rocker's deconstruction of ethnicity therefore prefigures wider critiques of ontological essentialism, epistemological foundationalism, and constructions of the subject.<sup>48</sup>

### Decolonial Destabilizations

Alongside naturalist accounts of ethnocultural identity, anarchists have also questioned its stability and significance in their critiques of nationalism. What happens to these questionings, however, in the context of anarchists' membership or support of movements whose collective identity is constructed, among other things, around common language, heritage, and descent as constitutive features? I would like to argue that anarchist solidarities within a decolonial politics call into question all three of the approaches reviewed above.

Decolonial thinking has been described as an act of "epistemic disobedience" whereby people who share the "colonial wound" can carry out a "political

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45 Ibid., 347–350.

46 N. Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 2012); S. Newman, *Postanarchism*. (Cambridge: Polity, 2015).

47 Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, 436.

48 D. Rousselle, *After Post-Anarchism* (Berkeley, Calif.: Repartee, 2012), 215ff.

and epistemic de-linking” from western dominance and the ways of thinking it imposes.<sup>49</sup> Decolonial approaches thus place systemic racism at the center of social critique, and in the context of past and present dispossessions of peoples from their land through conquest, slavery, genocide, and modern corporate power. Racial stratification in both settler-colonial states and “multi-cultural” Europe, as well as economic and military dominance over the global South, point to the significance of colonialism not merely as a historical event, but as a set of logics that continue to maintain and deepen global inequalities. For radical social movements, a decolonial approach means that struggles for social transformation should be carried out with explicit attention to the colonial and thus racialized dimension of inequality, rather than uncritically reproducing the same western universalist formulas that have masked the colonial project, and that political decolonization should be integrated into their program for social change.

Naturalist approaches need to respond to this critique, at least to the extent that they appeal to universalist humanism. But it poses the most serious problems for the classist approach, especially in its first version above. American anarchist of color Roger White argues that claims about “the universality and primacy of the class struggle” are “part of the philosophical residue of Anglo-European colonialism.”<sup>50</sup> This is because they deny non-white people historical subjectivity as such, bracketing the ethnic basis of their struggles while projecting onto them a Eurocentric conception of the proletariat. This amounts to a project “to strip the masses of their national and communal identities in exchange for a workerist one.”<sup>51</sup> Instead, anarchists should hold race on par with gender, class, age and other irreducible axes of domination. An intersectional approach, which avoids granting any of these regimes analytical primacy,<sup>52</sup> is therefore more theoretically sound and politically inclusive than class reductionism.

The thinner universalism of culturalist approaches might escape this specific critique. However, the way in which Rocker moves from a rejection of the nation to a rejection of the ethnicity of peoples still leaves a case to be answered. His attempt to undercut the validity of ethnic and language groups,

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49 W. Mignolo, “Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (2009): 159–181.

50 R. White, *Anarchy and Race* (Oakland, Calif.: Jailbreak Press, 2004), 16.

51 Ibid.; cf. A. Alston, “Beyond Nationalism, But Not Without It,” *Anarchist Panther* 1, no. 1 (1999), <http://anarchistpanther.net/writings/writing4.html>.

52 D. Shannon and J. Rogue, *Refusing to Wait: Anarchism and Intersectionality* (Johannesburg: Zabalaza Books, 2009).



understandable in the context of his ontological attack on European nationalism and racism, would also undermine the constitutive role of common ancestry and language in the struggles of indigenous peoples and other oppressed ethnic groups. Indicative here is Rocker's instrumentalization of indigenous peoples to score a point against racialism. While linguistics and population genetics may provide various assessments of groups' isolation, the argument effectively denies these groups their heritage and leads to non-recognition in their claims to self-determination. As Ramnath argues, however:

Where ethnicity is brutalized and culture decimated, it is callous to discount the value of ethnic pride, asserting the right to exist as such ... in the colonial context, the defense of ethnic identity and cultural divergence from the dominant is a key component of resistance.<sup>53</sup>

Rocker's culturalist and deconstructive critique, directed as it is at European nationalisms, cannot be generalized without some further filter that would allow us to account for the asymmetry between ethnocultural expressions that are supported by states and ones that states seek to repress, assimilate, or co-opt while denying their bearers self-determination on their own terms. Just as anarchists have an obligation to take into account their own positionality in their relationship with ethnoculturally-constructed movements,<sup>54</sup> so must anarchist thought find a way to reconcile the deconstructive impulse with its politics of recognition.<sup>55</sup> I would like to suggest a provisional response to this

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53 Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*, 21.

54 Cf. A.J. Barker and J. Pickerill, "Radicalizing Relationships To and Through Shared Geographies: Why Anarchists Need to Understand Indigenous Connections to Land and Place," *Antipode* 44, no. 5 (2012): 1705–1725.

55 The philosophical dilemma central to this chapter is more basic than the one raised by national liberation movements. In the latter case, the dilemma is not so much about the recognition of stateless groups' ethnocultural identity, nor is it raised by their claims to be freed of domination. Instead, it is brought about the extent to which a national liberation struggle is likely to take a statist (and capitalist) form and thus replace one oppressive system with another. However, as I have argued elsewhere, anarchists can support national liberation movements *even if* they aspire to statist independence. First, while new states may maintain oppressive social relations of different kinds, this will most often be preferable to a status quo that is even more oppressive and deadly. Second, stateless groups already live under occupying states, be they Israel, Turkey or Indonesia, and the formation of a new national state creates only a quantitative change, not a qualitative one. Third, support for a statist solution may be a valid strategic choice, to the extent that it would create more space for workers', women's and environmental struggles in both

dilemma, which rather than reverting back to naturalism, applies the principles of subsidiarity and leadership-taking to the deconstructive task itself.

Subsidiarity is the principle that people should have power over an issue in proportion to their stake in it. It is a basic feature of anarchist organizational thinking, tied to values of decentralization and autonomy. Applied in a decolonial context, subsidiarity places leadership in decolonial struggles in the hands of indigenous groups, and has implications for the way in which non-natives or citizens of an occupying state can offer them support and solidarity. According to Walia,

Taking leadership means being humble and honoring front-line voices of resistance ... offering tangible solidarity as needed and requested ... taking initiative for self-education ... organizing support with the clear consent and guidance of an Indigenous community or group, building long-term relationships of accountability and never assuming or taking for granted the personal and political trust that non-natives may earn from Indigenous peoples over time.<sup>56</sup>

In Israel-Palestine, where armed conflict is on-going and segregation is the norm, Israeli anarchists have also developed principles for their engagement in joint struggle with Palestinian popular committees in the West Bank. As Snitz notes,

The first principle is that although the struggle is joint, Palestinians are affected more by the decisions taken within it, and therefore are the ones who should make the important decisions. Second, Israelis have a special responsibility to respect Palestinian self-determination, including respecting social customs and keeping out of internal Palestinian politics.<sup>57</sup>

This decolonial logic is not only relevant to settler-colonial societies, but also to Europe given its absorption, limitation, and securitization of migration from former colonies and current conflict zones. In this context, European activists against borders and deportations share an ethos of taking leadership from

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societies, and help develop a former conflict zone towards eventual social transformation. See U. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 154–156.

56 H. Walia, “Decolonizing Together: Moving Beyond a Politics of Solidarity Toward a Practice of Decolonization,” *Briarpatch Magazine*, 1 Jan. 2012, <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/decolonizing-together>.

57 K. Snitz, “Tear Gas and Tea,” in Gordon and Grietzer, *Anarchists Against the Wall*, 57–58.

self-organized movements of refugees and migrants, and of avoiding both a savior mentality and the condescension of revolutionary tutelage.

As a parallel to these political orientations, I would like to suggest the idea of philosophical subsidiarity as an ethical filter for the deconstructive undertaking, coloring it with an awareness of the asymmetries of power to which decolonial critiques point. This approach can remain philosophically committed, in the last instance, to an anti-foundationalist position that denies ultimate validity to ethnicity (or to any other supposed absolute). However, the critique is applied in view of the critic's own positionality—it should not “punch down.” The task of deconstructing an identity belongs to those who bear it, or to those who are oppressed in its name. For members of groups seeking self-determination, this means “not forgetting that cultural expression must include the right to redefine the practices of one's own culture over time ... the decolonization of culture shouldn't mean rewinding to a ‘pure’ original condition but instead restoring the artificially stunted capacity freely to grow and evolve.”<sup>58</sup>

To personalize for a moment: as an Israeli Jewish anarchist taking a deconstructive position towards ethnicity, my stake lies primarily in questioning Jewish nationalism and the idea of Jewish peoplehood as constructed through both religious and political institutions (and my own nationalist education). This does not mean that, e.g., Hebrew or Jewish culture no longer play a part in my identity. But it does deny the way in which these features are constructed in hegemonic religious and/or Zionist accounts of Jewish peoplehood. Further to that, I may hold a baseline anti-foundationalist position that denies peoplehood in general, and is thus comfortable with enterprises to radically deconstruct Jewish peoplehood in particular.<sup>59</sup> However, it is not for me to apply this critique to Palestinians' ethnocultural identity, even if such application is available in principle. By the same token, it is not for white Palestine solidarity activists to undermine Jewish peoplehood, a task that is more appropriately undertaken in direct Palestinian-Jewish partnership.

The subsidiarity of deconstruction can further be situated within the ethic of encounter between settler and indigenous activists promoted by Abdou, et al.<sup>60</sup> Drawing on Levinas, they suggest a mode of radical alliance which builds solidarity through honesty and mutual responsibility. In this ethic, recognition

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58 Ramnath, *Decolonizing Anarchism*, 21.

59 Cf. S. Sand, and Y. Lotan, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2010).

60 M. Abdou, R.J.F. Day, and S. Haberle, “Can There Be a Grassroots Multiculturalism? Some Notes Toward a Genealogical Analysis of Solidarity Practices in Canadian Activism Today,” in *Racism and Justice*, eds. S. Bolaria, S.P. Hier, and D. Lett (Winnipeg, Man.: Fernwood, 2008), 207–221.

“requires that the settler disrupt his or her colonial (dis)orientation to the other” and adopt a disposition that includes “acceptance of the unknown—a lack of anticipation of the other’s essence; a knowledge of self-identity incorporating an understanding of infinite responsibility; a willingness to accept difference and avoid the tendency to subsume the other into the same; and finally, a humility in the face of the other, which implies having the courage and willingness necessary to learn from the other.”<sup>61</sup>

I would finally like to highlight the consequences of a decolonial approach for the idea of bioregionalism, with its alternative model of local belonging. A bioregion is commonly defined as a continuous geographic area with unique natural features in terms of terrain, climate, soil, watersheds, wildlife and human settlements and cultures.<sup>62</sup> While rooted in environmental concerns, bioregionalism is attractive to anarchists because its political implications look beyond nationalism and the nation state in the territorial dimension of social organization. Since bioregions do not recognize arbitrary political boundaries, and are unsuitable for management from a distant center, a bioregional model is consistent with a stateless society and its associated sustainable practices are more likely to promote an ethos of cooperation and mutual aid in the stewardship of regional environments.

As an alternative to nationalism, bioregionalism offers a model of belonging that is not bound to the state, and remains open to interpolation with multiple personal and collective identities in terms of ethnicity, language, spirituality, gender, sexual preference, vocation, lifestyle etc. However, the discussion above points to an understanding less often expressed by bioregionalist advocates, namely that any transition to such a model would require a decolonization of social relations in the bioregional space. Such a process, moreover, is likely to involve conflicts over the redistribution of power and resources along racial (as well as gender, and other) lines. Seen through a decolonial and revolutionary lens, bioregionalism must therefore seek not only decentralization along ecological lines but an egalitarian agenda within the bioregion as well. From such a position, discussion could progress on questions relevant to current efforts at social transformation—e.g., how work towards ecological transition in mixed communities can be connected to social contention, or how grassroots forms of encounter can become the basis for radical agendas.

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61 Ibid., 215–216.

62 V. Andruss, et al., eds., *Home! A Bioregional Reader* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1990).

## Conclusion

Anarchist engagements with nationalism have all attempted, in different ways, to excise the state from the ontology of social bonds. Even support for statist national liberation movements continues to take place within a wider program leading to no borders and no nations, envisioning forms of territorial organization which are multi-layered and decentralized and over which no identity holds a monopoly, just as identities themselves are no longer defined by and within systems of domination and escape binary and essentialist constructions. Yet this very interest in ontological fluidity, the tendency to erode certainties and destabilize foundations, is also in certain cases marked by privilege and can become an oppressive tool or an unreflective hindrance to solidarity. In this chapter I have suggested that an ethic of subsidiarity is necessary in bringing the deconstructive enterprise of anti-national politics to terms with decolonial critiques and the positionalities they highlight.

The integration of a decolonial approach into anarchist thought and practice is far from complete; yet its advances offer an encouraging reminder of anarchism's continuing vitality and ability to self-critically transform itself in response to new challenges. By openly confronting the tensions inherent in their engagement with nationalism and ethnocultural identity, anarchists can create practices of solidarity and identity-transformation that prefigure a society which is not only stateless and classless but also decolonized. The refusal to bypass ethnocultural difference, attempting instead to embrace the complexities it raises while building a radical practice, potentially places anarchists in a much more productive polarity with the far right than universalism or class reductionism are capable of. At a time in which state nationalism is on the rise worldwide, often in racist and religious guises, the articulation of such approaches from below is more urgent than ever.

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# Anarchism and Sexuality

*Sandra Jeppesen and Holly Nazar*

## Introduction

In recent years, queer anarchist and anarchist feminist scholars and activists have developed a growing body of literature on anarchism and sexuality. Two key anthologies have contributed to the debates on anarchist approaches to the politics of sexuality. The first is a collected edition entitled *Anarchism & Sexuality: Ethics, Relationships and Power*<sup>1</sup> consisting of eleven chapters covering topics as varied as affect, love, sexual dissidence, postanarchism and other anarchist theories, anarchist literary analysis, autonomous queer spaces and other activist practices, as well as embodied feminist decision-making practices. The second, *Queering Anarchism: Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire*,<sup>2</sup> is even more varied in its topics, including polyamory, heteronormativity, gay marriage, queer and trans body politics, queer disabilities, sex work, harm reduction, BDSM, sexual consent, and queer anti-capitalist political economies. These two anthologies provide an excellent background on anarchist approaches to a diversity of sexualities and sexual concerns.

In addition to these anthologies, we have elsewhere published a generic historical overview of anarchism and sexuality that discusses the many tactics employed by anarchist feminists and queer anarchists to bring anarchism into radical queer and feminist movements, as well as to bring queer and feminist issues to the fore in anarchist organizing.<sup>3</sup> There we argue that anarchist feminists and queer anarchists have employed many tactics. We consider diverse sexualities as an anarchist approach to critiques of the mainstream body and its commodification in contemporary capitalist culture, which is of course also patriarchal and heteronormative.

In the current chapter we seek to build on that work, considering sexuality and the body from an anarchist activist and theoretical perspective, using

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1 J. Heckert and R. Cleminson, eds., *Anarchism & Sexuality* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

2 C.C. Daring, J. Rogue, D. Shannon, and A. Volcano, eds., *Queering Anarchism* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2012).

3 S. Jeppesen and H. Nazar, "Genders and Sexualities in Anarchist Movements," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, ed. R. Kinna (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 162–191.

the framework of surveillance as it takes place at borders, in prisons, and in activist spaces. These are hotly contested spaces for queer, trans, and feminist anarchists in the contemporary landscape of social control, where sexuality and sexual violence are used by the state to monitor, control and punish unruly anarchist bodies. We therefore focus on the sexualized and gendered body in protest, resistance, and activist spaces, drawing material from protest movements, activist experiences, and news coverage, using surveillance as a key framework.

Edward Snowden's revelations regarding global technologies and practices of surveillance, alongside reports that male police in the United Kingdom have been having sex, marrying, and even having children with women activists under their surveillance, raise serious concerns regarding privacy, communication, free speech, and protest rights. Jenkins has observed that

the scope and scale of surveillance have inexorably expanded. From NKVD informers and postal intercepts to wiretaps, internet monitoring, spy satellites and unmanned drones, and from traffic cops to vehicle registration recognition technology and CCTV monitored by centralized traffic management centers, surveillance has expanded to fill the spaces and means available to it, becoming simultaneously more intrusive and more distant.<sup>4</sup>

Lyon et al. similarly argue that with new technologies, surveillance has become "simultaneously more visible and invisible."<sup>5</sup> Whereas early surveillance studies focused predominantly on video or visual surveillance, Torin Monahan has expanded the definition, following the advent of the Internet and other advances in technologies, to include an ever-growing range of "new technologies of identification, monitoring, tracking, data analysis, and control."<sup>6</sup> Monahan is specifically interested in how power inserts itself into society via technologies of surveillance as social control. In other words, a starting point for analysis might be practices in which technologies of surveillance merge with technologies of social control.<sup>7</sup>

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4 R. Jenkins, "Identity, Surveillance and Modernity," in *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, eds. D. Lyon, K. Haggerty, and K. Ball (New York: Routledge, 2012), 165.

5 D. Lyon, et al., "Introducing Surveillance Studies," in Lyon, Haggerty, and Ball, *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, 3.

6 T. Monahan, "Surveillance and Inequality," *Surveillance and Society* 5, no. 3 (2008): 217.

7 Ibid.

Drawing on Monahan's work, the objective of this chapter is to use an anarchist-feminist analysis of power to consider how surveillance has differential impacts on gendered and sexualized bodies.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, how have antiauthoritarian or anarchist queer, trans, and/or feminist activists and researchers used both theories and practices to challenge, resist, or subvert the surveillance of activist bodies? We will consider these questions in relation to four different geospatial locations: borders, prisons, protests, and activist spaces.

We found that there is not currently an anarchist-feminist critical theory of sexualized bodies in resistance to state and capitalist institutions of power that exercise surveillance as a form of oppression or domination. However, we have also observed many forms of this kind of resistance in practice, in anarchist challenges to borders and prisons, and in the self-reflexive use of gendered and sexualized bodies in movements of resistance. Additionally, there is a growing body of literature on intersectionality theory from an anarchist-feminist perspective, which theorizes how institutionalized or systemic oppressions such as sexuality (heteronormativity) and gender (patriarchy, gender normativity) are interconnected with systems such as racism, nation-states, and capitalism. Furthermore, there is an expanding field of literature on surveillance, some of which accounts for resistance movements against this surveillance and some for gender, sexuality, and the body under surveillance.

Much of the scholarly work to be considered here is not explicitly anarchist-feminist; however, it can be expanded and critiqued to develop a queer anarchist-feminist framework for understanding philosophies of anarchist sexuality. Our contribution will be to render visible and extend the theorization of the crucial work that queer, trans, and feminist anarchists and antiauthoritarians are undertaking in resistance to surveillance and other technologies of social control. A key contribution of anarchist-feminism to the study of state power will be a more rigorous and systematic attention to how power is exercised through control and surveillance of the body and, further, how it has been disrupted by queer, trans, and feminist anarchists, through revolutionary ways of performing our bodies.

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8 S. Jeppesen, "Toward an Anarchist-Feminist Analytics of Power," in *The Anarchist Imagination: Anarchism Encounters the Humanities and Social Sciences*, eds. C. Levy and S. Newman (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

### Theoretical Framework: Toward an Anarchist-feminist Theory of Surveillance

In this section we will map out three key concepts in surveillance studies—the panopticon, social sorting, and social control—that provide the context for this intervention, and expand our understanding of surveillance in terms of its gendered and sexualized implications.

Michel Foucault critically analyzed the concept of the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*.<sup>9</sup> Foucault reconsidered the mechanism of surveillance whereby the entirety of an institution (e.g., a prison, school, or hospital) is visible from a single vantage point, emphasizing how this kind of surveillance inserts social control at a multiplicity of sites.<sup>10</sup> Direct oversight of individuals (doctors, jail guards, inmates, students, teachers, etc.) is no longer required because the individuals themselves internalize the mechanism of surveillance, engaging in self-surveillance.

Following Foucault, Monahan argues that increases in state and privatized surveillance have developed as social management tools under neoliberalism to further intensify existing social inequities in an effect known as social sorting, whereby surveillance serves to further stratify social classes. He defines electronic surveillance as “technological systems that facilitate the control of people.”<sup>11</sup> For example, cities will install surveillance cameras in poor neighborhoods with claims that this action will reduce crime, but instead it serves to intensify policing of marginalized communities, resulting in increased criminalization of people in socioeconomically disenfranchised areas, simultaneously making wealthier people feel safe and secure as their neighborhoods are not under surveillance.

However, beyond surveillance camera technologies, people in poverty also face intensified surveillance of their persons and personal information through technologies of control including being required to present identification, fill out forms and account for themselves in order to access services such as social assistance, food banks, subsidized child care, social housing, and health care, which reflects what Monahan calls “the control potentials of data management.”<sup>12</sup> Surveillance can be understood as a form of ubiquitous computing that constructs particular regimes of truth about individuals and

9 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 2nd edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

10 Ibid., 195–230.

11 T. Monahan, “Dreams of Control at a Distance: Gender, Surveillance, and Social Control,” *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies* 9, no. 2 (2009): 287.

12 Ibid.

groups in society, benefiting some and penalizing others: "Surveillance technologies, therefore, possess degrees of agency such that they do not simply uncover pre-existing truths but actively contribute to the creation of certain truth regimes."<sup>13</sup>

These technologies and the produced regimes of truth therefore project unequal effects and intensifications on those already marginalized, resulting not in neutral technological applications but in an increased divide between social classes. Furthermore, when those in power do fall under the lens of technology, as Lyon et al. argue, "the surveillance of more powerful groups is often used to further their privileged access to resources, while for more marginalized groups surveillance can reinforce and exacerbate existing inequalities."<sup>14</sup> For example, the data of middle-class or upper-middle-class people is put under surveillance through frequent-flyer or frequent-buyer plans, which often result in those with greater wealth receiving free goods and services; or they may gain access to the fast-pass lane at the border. Surveillance therefore leads to what Monahan, Lyon, and others have called social sorting.

Monahan argues that surveillance systems therefore function not only as technological means of social sorting but also as social control: "Rather than seeing contemporary surveillance systems as providing security or threatening individual privacy, it may be more accurate and productive to view them as actualizing a micropolitics of social control within increasingly privatized and individualized public domains."<sup>15</sup> Surveillance thus needs to be understood as a sociotechnical system operated by both the state and the private sector, in public and private spheres, neither technologically determined nor entirely socially deterministic but as an integrated system constructed by and simultaneously constructing technologies, politics, culture, economics, and societal relationships. We will use the term "surveillant social control" to refer to this complex set of interconnected systems.

Surveillant social control can produce a chilling effect on radical activism. Amory Starr et al. have found that many global protests, such as the week-long convergences and demonstrations against economic summits like the World Economic Forum or the G20, or neoliberal institutions such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, have been increasingly subjected to police violence, surveillance, and other forms of social control.<sup>16</sup> The impact has been

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>14</sup> Lyon, Haggerty, and Ball, "Introducing Surveillance Studies," 3.

<sup>15</sup> Monahan, "Surveillance and Inequality," 219.

<sup>16</sup> A. Starr, L. Fernandez, and C. Scholl, *Shutting Down the Streets: Political Violence and Social Control in the Global Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 107–112.

the following: first, many activists have become intimidated into stepping back from social movement organizing; second, there is a reduction in solidarity among activist groups; and third, surveillance and social control have caused many groups and individuals to call into question their willingness to participate in some forms of legal but perhaps radical protest tactics such as civil disobedience, demonstrations, and other long-practiced forms of direct action. If surveillant social control serves to amplify social policing, social ordering, and social control, then how do existing regimes of truth regarding gender and sexuality play out in these new regimes of surveillance?

Monahan writes that “the reduction of people and social practices to data that can be easily manipulated is an exercise of power that demands feminist critique and intervention.”<sup>17</sup> Surveillant social control systems operate differently for women than for men. Hille Koskela builds on Laura Mulvey’s theory of the “male gaze” in which film images are revealed to be constructed by male cinematographers for consumption by male audience members who, as powerful subjects, turn their male gaze toward the sexualized female objects on screen.<sup>18</sup> Koskela argues that “vision is an essential element of surveillance and the experience of ‘being watched’ is highly gendered.”<sup>19</sup> Her emphasis is on video surveillance in specific locations within cities, analyzing differences between who monitors the video cameras and who is monitored. Koskela finds that “in many urban settings surveillance is gendered at a very simple level: most people behind a surveillance camera are male and the people under surveillance are disproportionately female.”<sup>20</sup> More specifically, there are different ways in which visual surveillance is gendered in practice: “Targets of suspicion are gendered in at least three senses: (1) how suspicion is constructed; (2) how the need for protection is perceived; and (3) when and where voyeuristic attention occurs.”<sup>21</sup>

In other words, women are most often not perceived as suspicious, or having the capacity or intent to be assailants, but rather are regarded as needing protection by male camera operators. However, “research on camera operators has demonstrated that the almost uniformly male camera operators often ignore or dismiss situations which most women would see as dangerous or

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17 Monahan, “Dreams of Control,” 300.

18 L. Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (New York: Palgrave, 2009).

19 H. Koskela, “You Shouldn’t Wear that ‘Body’: The Problematic of Surveillance and Gender,” in Lyon, Haggerty, and Ball, *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, 51.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

threatening, and it is in fact more often the case that women on the surveillance screen are of interest for the sexualized pleasure of the male watcher."<sup>22</sup>

In addition to surveillance camera interactions being gendered, there is a gendered mechanism in surveillant social control. Monahan's definition of surveillance as the use of technology for collecting data and tracking people's movements allows us to see that data management systems track, censure, and control women's movements and options in many ways, including through maternal social welfare allocation systems, health-care provision during pregnancy, the monitoring and control of purchasing practices, and other areas where women are the predominant group under surveillance. Monahan argues that "the concept of *privacy* is ultimately insufficient for analyzing the concerns of women subjected to forms of *bureaucratic surveillance* ... Instead, surveillance is about relations of power, domination, and conflict that are embedded within institutional structures and fueled by dubious cultural assumptions about the criminality of the poor."<sup>23</sup>

Monahan investigates welfare cards in the United States as a system that has been implemented to control the spending of those using it, who are predominantly women. Monahan argues specifically that "poor women of color, especially, are often the first targets of new surveillance systems. Examples proliferate."<sup>24</sup> The study of women on welfare revealed that case workers would flag women's spending patterns and berate them for purchasing clothing or other nonessential items, exercising inappropriate domination and control, playing what the women perceived to be the role of an abusive boyfriend or husband.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the welfare card is only accepted at big box stores, often meaning women have to spend money on taxis to shop in locations not accessible by public transport. In these and other ways, "neoliberal ideologies of privatization and responsabilization are being inscribed in technological systems and institutional arrangements. Although corporations may benefit tremendously from such arrangements, the poor—and especially poor women—are subjected to increased scrutiny and control."<sup>26</sup> For Monahan, "It is the control-at-a-distance dimension that especially enables the masculinization of work spaces and practices, meaning that individuals in these spaces are governed by paternalistic logics of control that exceed the spaces themselves."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>23</sup> Monahan, "Dreams of Control," 292.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 295.

Women are subjected to masculinized, rational, technologized systems of surveillance beyond the spaces they inhabit, which limit their movements, opportunities, control, and autonomy over their own life decisions and bodies.

Monahan argues that this is a masculinized neoliberal logic that is intensifying, but not without resistance. She makes some suggestions for alternatives to the surveillant logic of social control. First, "If situated knowledges [e.g., of women] were given more voice, value, and influence, then it is likely that spaces, systems, and social relations could be reconfigured in more just ways."<sup>28</sup> A shift in thinking toward the public good, including community ownership and use of spaces might supplant the rationalized masculinization of the public sphere, validating instead the experiences of women, people of color, and people living in poverty. We might also consider resistance by indigenous people, disabled people, and people with mental health concerns. In other words, it might be possible to transplant the neoliberal logic and instead "emphasize rights over benefits, social over individual responsibility, and public over private management of the systems."<sup>29</sup>

Here we have introduced the term gender into our understanding of surveillant social control to indicate that while the technological logic of these systems has intensified surveillance, the underlying neoliberal logic of social sorting creates inequities and social control which intensify social injustice; these systems are not only paternalistic but also masculinized, patriarchal, heteronormative, racist, colonial, and ableist. Such an analysis expands our understanding of an anarchist-feminist and anarchist-queer analysis of surveillance.

### **Borders: State Control of Diversely Sexed and Gendered Bodies**

Surveillance studies have identified borders as a crucial point at which the state intervenes to differentially regulate the mobility of specific bodies through surveillant sorting.<sup>30</sup> This social sorting has specific impacts for people at border crossings, where some are fast-tracked, some are subjected to perfunctory searches, and others are singled out for more in-depth searches

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28 Ibid., 299.

29 Ibid., 300.

30 P. Adey, "Secured and Sorted Mobilities: Examples from the Airport," *Surveillance & Society* 1, no. 4 (2004): 500–519; Lyon, Haggerty, and Ball, "Introducing Surveillance Studies"; S. Magnet, *When Biometrics Fail: Gender, Race, and the Technology of Identity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011); Monahan, "Surveillance and Inequality"; Monahan, "Dreams of Control."



based on profiling.<sup>31</sup> With the increasing impact of surveillant systems of social control, borders operate beyond the simple geographical lines on maps created by nation-state territorial divisions; they also function at airports, on waterways, and even in large urban areas near borders.<sup>32</sup> We suggest, following Foucault, that surveillance systems operating at borders have been internalized, such that people self-select based on perceived likelihood of admissibility at a legal border crossing, sometimes choosing to stay put, cross a border illegally, leave a particularly racist or homophobic state (in the United States) through “self-attrition,”<sup>33</sup> or apply for alternative citizenship to avoid having to cross a border.<sup>34</sup>

States also pass laws to criminalize people through the lack of specific papers, thereby doing work that supports US border control, such that “at the local level, the laws make all that is required to exist as an undocumented person illegal so as to capture them.”<sup>35</sup> Local legislation, ordinances, and bylaws, such as the requirement in Arizona to have citizenship papers in order to get a driver’s license, or the prohibitions against sleeping in public in many large cities, create technologies of surveillance that involve local police in aiding border police through traffic offenses or municipal bylaw violations.<sup>36</sup> People ticketed for these minor offenses then come under greater scrutiny by social technologies of surveillance to determine if they should be deported. These technologies of social control, in addition to being racialized, also take on a gendered and sexed quality, exercising specific forms of intensified scrutiny and control over nonconforming gender queer, trans, intersex or bodies, through applying normativizing regimes of truth.

Shoshana Magnet and Tara Rodgers study how surveillance technologies are used to construct not just regimes of truth but also technologically determinist regimes of governance. They argue, “We live in a virtual world, it is said, where bodies no longer matter. Yet the material body is central to modern forms of power and thus also key to state policies, borders, media, and technologies. As a result, new ways of visualizing the body are central to contemporary regimes

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31 Adey, “Secured and Sorted Mobilities,” 505.

32 Ibid., 500–519.

33 L. Fernandez, “Live, Love, and Work,” in *Beyond Walls and Cages: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis*, eds. J.M. Loyd, M. Mitchelson, and A. Burridge (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 228.

34 M. White, “Ambivalent Homonationalisms,” *Interventions* 15, no. 1 (2013): 49.

35 Fernandez, “Live, Love, and Work,” 230.

36 Ibid.

of governance.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Adey has found that border profiling relies on the border guard’s assessment of the body of the subject presenting themselves as a candidate to cross the border, leading to “the possibility of discrimination towards particular passengers, biases being held towards ethnicity, and national origin,”<sup>38</sup> and this despite the assertion by the Gore Commission that “it must be ensured that, ‘selection is not impermissibly based on national origin, racial, ethnic, and religious or gender characteristics.’”<sup>39</sup>

While sexuality and disability are not included in this list of prohibited grounds of discrimination, the key point here is the contradiction between the law (discrimination is not legal) and the practice (illegal profiling of bodies, such as those who appear to be Mexican in Arizona, those who appear to be Muslim in the United States and Canada post-9/11, or those who appear to be queer, trans, and/or of lower socioeconomic status, as well as indigenous people who are often barred from travelling under passports issued by the indigenous nation). Bodies at borders can therefore be at greater or lesser risk of being profiled in practice based on geopolitical shifts, events, or media coverage that create inaccurate perceptions of risk, as well as border guards’ personal prejudices and interpretations of specific bodily presentations.

Magnet and Rodgers pay particular attention to the use of backscatter x-ray machines as an allegedly less-invasive alternative to pat-downs, in which the subject does not know why they are being x-rayed nor what the machine does. The technology itself, however, like many forms of surveillance, has a gendered aspect in practice, putting the bodies of women, queer, and trans people at greater risk because their bodies can be revealed to be trans, and/or sexualized in specific ways by those viewing the images. For Magnet and Rodgers, “the alleged non-invasiveness and efficiency of the ‘virtual strip search,’ compared to the physical contact involved in a pat-down, represents a troubling trend in which the state consolidates its power through increasingly covert and concealed surveillance practices.”<sup>40</sup>

This kind of technology amounts to the increased control of the physical movement of bodies through borders, and reinforces existing interlocking systems of oppressions. Women, for example, will be surveilled for voyeuristic purposes by male x-ray operators; men may also be sexually objectified, as co-workers make statements based on genitals. Magnet and Rodgers discuss

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37 S. Magnet and T. Rodgers, “Stripping for the State: Whole Body Imaging Technologies and the Surveillance of Othered Bodies,” *Feminist Media Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012): 101–102.

38 Adey, “Secured and Sorted Mobilities,” 506.

39 Gore Commission, quoted in Adey, “Secured and Sorted Mobilities,” 506.

40 Magnet and Rodgers, “Stripping for the State,” 102.

protests over this practice with the example of “an Iraqi woman [who] holds up an image of a naked woman’s body taken by a backscatter camera. Farah al-Jaberi ... highlights the ways that these technologies violate both her bodily privacy and her religious beliefs,”<sup>41</sup> this despite manufacturers’ assertion that the backscatter camera is a neutral technology that treats every *body* equally.<sup>42</sup>

However, the unequal consequences for different bodies will depend not on the technology itself, but on the body being subjected to the scan; therefore, the technology can never be neutral, as the majority of bodies passing through these scanners will somehow be marked as “other” to the dominant or presumed neutral body—in other words, the Western straight white able-bodied cis-male body. Monahan refers to this as “body discrimination” in surveillance technologies, or “technologies that simply are not designed with a full range of bodies in mind,” but rather privilege “certain bodies—usually male, young, white, and able ones—over others.”<sup>43</sup>

Of concern are also the expectations of heteronormativity and cis-normativity, and the potential egregious consequences for those who do not “pass”—passing in this case being the ability to be perceived in public as heterosexual and/or cis-gendered. Heteronormativity is the dominant sexual model of social, cultural, political, and economic organization in many societies today. Cis-normativity is the assumption that the social norm is for people to be and perform the identity of the sex and gender they were assigned at birth. Families with children who have same-sex parents presenting passports at the border, transgender or transsexual subjects, intersex subjects, and others who deviate from heteronormativity or cis-normativity, revealed to the border guards through whole-body imaging techniques, are likely to be subjected to greater degrees of scrutiny, public outing, violence, and worse. For example, a trans person scanned in a local or rural airport where they live may risk being outed to coworkers or community members, leading to consequences such as loss of employment.<sup>44</sup>

Exposing oneself to this network of surveillance in the airport in order to clear security is to put one’s body at risk. Magnet and Rodgers assert, “In contemporary airport security contexts, losing one’s connection or failing to escape the network may involve unjustified bodily searches, and threat or enactment of imprisonment or deportation.”<sup>45</sup> They argue, contrary to the claim

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41 Ibid., 101.

42 Ibid., 102.

43 Monahan, “Dreams of Control,” 288.

44 Magnet and Rodgers, “Stripping for the State,” 111.

45 Ibid., 105.

that “whole body imaging technologies are not invasive because the scanners do not touch the body,”<sup>46</sup> that indeed these techniques do cause profound trauma for particular racialized, sexualized and gendered bodies that are in effect stripped naked by the state, forcing them to expose their contours and insides, “rendering the bodies of passengers, and the objects that travel with them, crystal clear”<sup>47</sup>—a transparency or visibility increasingly demanded by the state and borders.

Borders have thus become liminal spaces where the new surveillance technologies enforce regimes of gender binaries, failing to protect the human rights of trans, genderqueer, and intersex subjects who are gender nonconforming or not cis-normative. The authors explain that “whole body imaging technologies can reveal breasts, genitals, prostheses, and binding materials.”<sup>48</sup> This opens trans people to surveillance, further searches, punishment, and other forms of violence, as “whole body imaging technologies are a form of gender violence that prevents trans folks from travelling,” as they “are deployed to call particular performances of gender into question, mercilessly turning transgender bodies inside out in a search to discover the ‘truth’ of an individual’s gender identity, helping to produce transgender bodies as suspect.”<sup>49</sup>

Anarchist-feminist Judy Greenway also draws attention to how sexed and gendered bodies cross or are prevented from crossing borders. She discusses the complicated issue of “sexual freedom”<sup>50</sup> in light of contemporary issues such as the porn industry, sex trafficking, the global sex trade, sexual conservatism of the religious right, and “progressive liberalism which is far more limited and restrictive than it appears to be.”<sup>51</sup> What is interesting here is Greenway’s focus not just on the threat to “existing power relationships” but also on the commentators, the responses of conservatives, censorship, social pressures toward conformity, and the “resistance” (she uses this term to mean reactionary resistance to change) of those wishing to maintain the status quo. Anarchafeminists and anarchaqueers are put under surveillance and the authorities make concerted attempts to control and police them, including through use of state and state-sanctioned violence. At the same time, there

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46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 106.

48 Ibid., 111.

49 Ibid.

50 J. Greenway, “Sexual Anarchy, Anarchophobia, and Dangerous Desires,” in *Anarchism & Sexuality: Ethics, Relationships and Power*, eds. J. Heckert and R. Cleminson (New York: Routledge, 2011), xvi.

51 Ibid.

is an unchecked global flow of heteronormative sex trafficking and pornography of epic proportions. In other words, capitalist heteronormative profitable sexuality enters into free neoliberal global flows, while anticapitalist queer anarchist sexuality is put under surveillant systems of social control, precisely because the latter offers a clear threat to the former.

Melissa White also investigates the surveillance of queer couples in intensified neoliberal flows, under Canada's 2005 same-sex marriage laws (The Civil Marriage Act). She argues that there is an inherent violence in the process of applying for immigration, which more profoundly affects genderqueer or queer subjects and couples.<sup>52</sup> She describes a successful immigration sponsorship claim based on same-sex marriage rights achieved by the applicants performing and narrating themselves to the state as lesbians using female pronouns, whereas in actuality they self-identify as a "polyamorous genderqueer trans-fag couple."<sup>53</sup> This case is a telling example of how queer couples negotiate complex border crossings, and it demonstrates that, despite the progressiveness of the same-sex marriage legislation, the associated policy and procedures are constrictively homonormative, not allowing for gender variance, polyamory, or other diverse sexualities within the framework of what constitutes same-sex marriage. Borders, for White, "emerge as sites of heightened surveillance" that emphasize established social inequalities: "For anyone who has crossed the 'borders' of sexual, sexed and gendered intelligibility, the crossing of other territorialized borders only intensifies those experiences of potential social abjection, unevenly and in tandem with other dynamic registers of social difference."<sup>54</sup>

In other words, it is not every same-sex couple who passes muster, or simply passes. Rather, while some are incorporated, this "immigration recognition is inextricably tied up with the refusal of recognition to others who are framed as 'undesirable'."<sup>55</sup> The result, as others have intimated but White names, is a system of global apartheid, which she refers to as "a racialized and geopolitically uneven distribution of access to resources that is both organized and naturalized vis-à-vis citizenship, border security, and immigration regimes"<sup>56</sup> including those governing same-sex couples' claims for family status in Canada. While many of her interview subjects are happy to gain official status in Canada and no longer have to worry about living apart, being deported, having visas

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52 White, "Ambivalent Homonationalisms," 39.

53 Ibid., 38.

54 Ibid., 39.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 40.

revoked, or being outed and therefore ousted, White also finds that there is “a fundamental ambivalence towards nationalized terms of belonging” among her participants.<sup>57</sup>

They contrast Canada to the United States, where the only recognition given to same-sex partners is a negative one: If the state discovers that someone on a temporary visa is involved in a same-sex relationship, their visa may be revoked or not renewed, as there is a perceived overstay risk.<sup>58</sup> However, that person would not have the right to claim family status to acquire official status in the United States. Whereas such claims are possible in Canada, some of White’s participants are nonetheless disappointed that Canadian society is not homogenously non-homophobic; in other words, there is no promised “queer homeland” at the end of the immigration process, no “expansive pleasure or reward gained in return for a subjection to state power.”<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, White argues that LGBTQ movements tend to use rights discourse—in other words, queer rights to (im)migration—without questioning the “heterosexism and homophobic violence of nation-states and their attendant relationship recognition policies, practices and laws.”<sup>60</sup> She advocates for a more critical LGBTQ engagement with immigration policy and surveillance of queer bodies, calling into question the intensification of inequalities created by increased surveillance, and the demand that same-sex couples perform a specific kind of homonormative nationalism in order to be granted mobility access.<sup>61</sup>

A queer anarchist-feminist politics demands not that surveillance processes and technologies be improved so that women’s bodies are not sexualized or violated by surveillance, or so that queer and trans bodies are not subjected to homophobic or transphobic control or violence; nor that there be a kinder, gentler, or more progressive state that allows queer, racialized, and/or gendered subjects to flow more freely across territorial boundaries. Rather, queer-anarchist-feminists demand the complete elimination of borders, states, border guards, and all of the concomitant technologies used to enforce, police, and control movements across, over, under, or through them.

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57 Ibid., 43.

58 Ibid., 49–50.

59 Ibid., 45, 46.

60 Ibid., 51.

61 Ibid.

### Prisons: Gendering and Sexualization of Imprisoned Bodies by the State and Capital

The prison is another space in which surveillance and control are enacted differentially on queer, trans, and women's bodies. Foucault's concept of the panopticon, so fundamental to understanding surveillance, foundationally draws on theories of prison regulation and control. Some even argue that borders and prisons display certain similarities. As Gina Dent reports,

We continue to find that the prison is itself a border. This analysis has come from prisoners, who name the distinction between the 'free world' and the space behind the walls of the prison. This is an important interpretation that undoes the illusions of the powerful nation-states on the one hand and the seeming disorganization and chaos of capital's travels on the other.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, Angela Davis notes that prisons around the world are "uncannily similar."<sup>63</sup> Like airports and other kinds of borders, they have become standardized global institutions of surveillant social control.

However, the prison is, in many ways, a very different space than the border. While borders are concerned with moving people through them, and controlling who has the right to pass, prisons are precisely the opposite, concerned with keeping people in place and ensuring they do not pass through, or become unruly, while purportedly providing for their basic daily needs (at the same time often aiming to ensure their denial). Borders are traveler spaces, spaces where those with class privilege exercise mobility and freedom, whereas prisons are stultified places, places where nobody moves, where freedom is explicitly removed, where predominantly those who lack class privilege are housed until they die or the state decides they may go free.

Borders and prisons sometimes intersect: for example, people detained at borders may be held in detention centers—jail for people not charged with any crime; or people imprisoned may be extradited across state borders to be put on trial or jailed in a different nation-state than that in which they were apprehended. Nonetheless, both borders and prisons have guards who perform, enact, or enforce the institutional or state regimes of truth; both are intensifying with neoliberal regimes of capital and state power; and both require

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62 A. Davis and G. Dent, "Prison as a Border: A Conversation on Gender, Globalization and Punishment," *Signs* 26, no. 4 (2001): 1236–1237.

63 *Ibid.*, 1237.

those under their domain to be subjected to a variety of types of surveillance through a plethora of technologies and social processes.

Interestingly, backscatter x-ray technologies were originally used in prisons. Magnet and Rodgers have found that “testing a new technology on a vulnerable population who cannot refuse, like prisoners, is a well-traveled path in the introduction of new security technologies, including biometric identification.”<sup>64</sup> Other surveillant technologies of social control—such as metal detectors, closed-circuit television cameras, video surveillance, guards who admit and stand watch over interactions with visitors, phones, and plexiglass windows where everything you say can be recorded—are all used in prisons to monitor, control, and keep imprisoned subjects subjugated.

For Foucault, what was of interest was the mechanism by which the technological functions of the panopticon were translated into social functions, internalized by those under surveillance, resulting in subjects embodying the characteristics of surveillance themselves—warning others that if they engage in a particular behavior they will be caught, avoiding certain proscribed places or pleasures, and self-policing or self-guarding by following the regime. The institution controls everything: from where you eat and sleep, and with or in the proximity of whom, to what you wear, to the volume, content, and timing of your daily meals, to any kind of communication with the outside world, including media, books, magazines, and interpersonal communications such as phone calls, letters, and email.

While this is already an intensely and intimately aggressive regulatory system of routinized violence with intense effects and trauma experienced on the bodies, hearts, and minds of those imprisoned, these effects only intensify through the use of solitary confinement, physical violence, and arbitrary sanctions by guards. Like surveillance at borders, the effects and impacts are differential, with some bodies (queer, trans, female, disabled, racialized, and indigenous) being at greater risk than others for surveillance, control, punishment, and further violence. Indeed, Magnet and Rodgers identify a “resemblance between airports and prisons, as both reveal the body through an ‘architecture of nudity’ in ways that disproportionately endanger particular communities.”<sup>65</sup>

Extending the logic of the architecture of nudity, Davis argues that surveillant technologies of control include what she and other prison activists refer to as “state sexual assault,”<sup>66</sup> that is, the normalization of strip searches of

64 Magnet and Rodgers, “Stripping for the State,” 108.

65 Ibid., 105.

66 A. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (Toronto: Publishers Group Canada, 2003), 63.



women's bodies in institutionalized prison practices. She notes that "[Assata] Shakur's autobiography provides an abundance of insights about the gendering of state punishment and reveals the extent to which women's prisons have held on to oppressive patriarchal practices that are considered obsolete in the 'free world'."<sup>67</sup> These practices include an "internal search" in which women's bodies are invasively searched against their consent, including their anal cavity and vagina, and sometimes both at the same time, a practice that prisoners explicitly refer to as "finger-fucking" and which has therefore been documented as a routinized embodied experience of sexual assault.<sup>68</sup>

Many prisoners are subjected to varying degrees of sexual assault, which prisons do very little to stop or control. In addition to strip searches, female, queer, and trans prisoners are also often the object of other forms of state sexual assault, including rape by prison guards. Many prisoners are subjected to varying degrees of sexual assault, which prisons do very little to stop or control. While female prisoners must be surveilled and controlled, the (often male) guards are free to come and go. However the nonconsensual sexual activity in prisons, where women's bodies are already stripped of their autonomy, is often blamed on the women themselves, despite a lack of consent. In a normative patriarchal reversal known as victim blaming, "sexual abuse by prison guards is translated into hypersexuality of women prisoners. The notion that female 'deviance' always has a sexual dimension persists in the contemporary era."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, Davis argues that women who are subjected to sexual abuse are socially sorted into categories whereby "this intersection of criminality and sexuality continues to be racialized."<sup>70</sup> Not only are women of color imagined as hypersexual, but also "white women labeled as 'criminals' are more closely associated with Blackness than their 'normal' counterparts." In other words, social class, sexuality, and race are interconnected in systems of surveillant social control at work in the prison system.

In the United States, punishment in prisons, including convict lease systems, was based on punishment practices under slavery, and specific acts when committed by Black people were criminalized under the Black Codes and other Jim Crow laws (designating all races in the US as "separate but equal"), whereas the same acts were not criminalized when engaged in by white people. Moreover, surveillance of Black bodies was considered an important part of prison life, a reality that has only intensified with an increased reliance on surveillance and

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67 Ibid., 64.

68 Ibid., 63.

69 Ibid., 68.

70 Ibid.

social control technologies. For example, the technology of chaining workers together in chain gangs was an early surveillant social control technology, as were whips used to lash prisoners for poor work performance; similarly relevant are the technologies of watch towers and guns, as well as the violent racialized social sorting technologies of racism, KKK marches, and burning crosses outside the prison that led to institutionalized, racialized social sorting within prisons.

In *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Davis argues that, in the 1990s,

internal changes—in part through the application of new technologies—led the U.S. prison system in a much more repressive direction ... The turn toward increased repression in a prison system, distinguished from the beginning of its history by its repressive regimes, caused some journalists, public intellectuals, and progressive agencies to oppose the growing reliance on prisons to solve social problems that are actually exacerbated by mass incarceration.<sup>71</sup>

The solution for Davis and for many feminist antiracist activists is not piecemeal reforms to the prison system, but abolition of the prison system itself. She articulates how prisons have come into existence in very recent history, originally seen simply as holding spaces until the subject could be tried and then punished. It was only recently that the holding space itself became the punishment.<sup>72</sup>

Davis and Dent together further several key arguments for abolition of prisons, suggesting that people once thought it would be impossible to abolish slavery, lynching, and segregation, as these three practices were deeply entrenched in the historical sociocultural practices of the United States, as prisons are today.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, they suggest the move toward restorative justice might be more effective than prisons, whose stated intent was originally “penitence” (hence penitentiary) or rehabilitation. The organization, structure, and surveillance and punishment technologies within prisons were never designed for penitence or rehabilitation, however, but rather for reinforcement of power structures and abject subjugation of prisoners. Technologies of routinization, dependency, domination, violence, and control cannot and will never rehabilitate individuals subjected to them, but rather tend to create subjects who are routinized, dependent on others, and thus not empowered or self-motivated,

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>73</sup> Davis and Dent, “Prison as a Border.”

and who are taught to participate in unequal relations of domination, violence, and control. In other words, the technologies of violence enacted on the body and mind of prisoners by guards, the prison system, and other prisoners are precisely behaviors that are learned and practiced by prisoners within the prison system and, after release, upon emergence into the “free world.”

If the prison is a borderland between exiting the “free world” and re-entering the “free world,” then we can see that this borderland has its own technologies of surveillant violence. However, the bodies being disciplined in prisons are in a sense the same bodies that the airport and other border surveillant technologies would single out for intensified scrutiny. The main difference is that those in prisons have gone through a legal process (complex and often unjust as that process might be) whereas those at borders are being examined to see if they should be singled out for criminalization, deportation, extradition, juridical process, or other violent state attentions.

Davis argues not for simple reforms to the prison system, but rather for the abolition of all prison systems:

As important as some reforms may be—the elimination of sexual abuse and medical neglect in women’s prison, for example—frameworks that rely exclusively on reforms help to produce the stultifying idea that nothing lies beyond the prison. Debates about strategies of decarceration, which should be the focal point of our conversations on the prison crisis, tend to be marginalized when reform takes the center stage.<sup>74</sup>

This is an expression of “forefront organizing,” an anarchist approach in which those who are most affected by a particular issue should be taking leadership roles at the forefront of the organizing efforts. Part of this principle involves working for reforms that will save or vastly improve the lives of individuals and collectivities in the immediate instance, while at the same time not settling for reforms only, or having a reform-based movement. Rather, anarchists base their organizing efforts on calling attention to systemic issues in immigration prevention, in prisons, in surveillant and social control of the bodies of women, queers, trans people, and people of color. While these forms of social control, based on the social sorting of subjects according to race, class, gender, sexuality, and other systemic oppressions, emanate from corrupt systems, queer anarchist-feminists do not see reform as any kind of ultimate solution to these profound problems of social control that produce social inequalities—both as their stated intention and clear impact. Some argue that these systems can be improved

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74 Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 11.

to produce social equality, whereas anarchists see this as a naive proposition that belies the actual functioning of the systems themselves and the way they enforce unequal social relations as their basic premise and objective.

The Anarchist Black Cross is a prison abolition movement that works to ameliorate everyday conditions within prisons, but not as an end in itself. Similarly, groups such as No One Is Illegal and the No Border Networks organize to ameliorate the everyday lives of individuals caught up in the draconian global immigration system, while at the same time challenging the system of borders that deems individuals' very existence illegal. In the next two sections we turn to resistance movements to examine how anarchist-feminists engage in embodied acts of resistance against a range of surveillant systems of social control.

### Resistance: The Gendered/Sexualized Body in Protest

In a recent interview with Jamie Heckert, Judith Butler expands on her work on the materiality of the body in an arguably anarchist-feminist perspective analyzing the body in relation to the state, especially during protests. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler describes the relation of the body and the "law."<sup>75</sup> The law "produces" the body, but there has to be a body for the threat of the law to have weight: "There must be a body trembling before the law, a body whose fear can be compelled by the law, a law that produces the trembling body prepared for its inscription, a law that marks the body *first* with fear only then to mark it again with the symbolic stamp of sex."<sup>76</sup> *Bodies that Matter* does not cross over into subject-state relations, but this statement contains a key hypothesis: the power of any law depends on a fearful body, and this body must be singled out and made a subject before any law can operate. This also applies to practices of bodily control and surveillance by the state.

Butler connects this observation—that the state and law produce the fearful body—to embodied activist practices of protest. She sees protest as a direct countermove to the construction and naturalization of a fearful, state-controllable body. In her conviction that the power of the state has a continuous dependence on the construction of a fearful body, Butler builds on and then deviates from Foucault's observations in *Discipline and Punish* of power operating on the body. Foucault argues that the transition from punishment

75 J. Heckert, "On Anarchism: An Interview with Judith Butler," in Heckert and Cleminson, *Anarchism and Sexuality*, 93–99.

76 J. Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 101. Italics in original.

as a spectacle of physical pain to punishment as the suspension of rights and liberty results from a realization that spectacles of punishment in fact had the potential to undermine the power of those creating them. The gruesome punishments of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance could easily lead the spectator to equate the brutality of the crime to the brutality of the punishment, thus understanding the state as lawless and brutal, and the convict conversely as deserving of "pity or admiration."<sup>77</sup> The "physical confrontation" between the convict being punished and the executioner as representative of the state, in many forms of punishment lacked dignity and moral standing.<sup>78</sup> Once this was realized by lawmakers, the emphasis shifted to the legal process of judgment, conviction, and moral rehabilitation of the accused, whereby increasing efforts were made to hide forms of capital and corporal punishment from public view, despite the continued attraction of spectators.<sup>79</sup>

Following Foucault's reasoning regarding the pitfalls of punishment-as-spectacle, with Butler, we assert that this dynamic is still relevant. Foucault observes legal state violence on the body at the scaffold:

The apportioning of blame is redistributed: in punishment-as-spectacle a confused horror spread from the scaffold; it enveloped both executioner and condemned; and, although it was always ready to invert the shame inflicted on the victim into pity or glory, it often turned the legal violence of the executioner into shame.<sup>80</sup>

The enactment of brutal power renders the body-in-punishment powerful in this revelation, interrupting the ability of the state to enact power with impunity and invisibility. Similarly, Butler observes the effectiveness of physical direct-action protest in the West Bank:

If you follow, for instance, the weekly demonstrations at Bi'lin, you can see that human bodies are put into the path of machines that are building the separation wall, are exposing themselves to tear gas, and literally producing an interruption and redirection of military power. The point is to enter into the scene, the building, the movements, to stop them, to redirect them, but also to deploy the body as an instrument of resistance ... But it also has to do with exposing and stopping the violence of an

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 52–53.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 9.

ostensibly legal authority ... since when the legal regime is itself a violent regime, and legal violence consumes all recourse to due process or legal intervention, then anarchism becomes the way of contesting and opposing the violent operation of the state.<sup>81</sup>

Placing one's body in the way of the machinery of a violent state exposes the violence of the state and its identification with brutality and criminality, which can easily be hidden behind the naturalization of unequal relations of power in everyday life. Like public punishment, physical protest erodes the dignity and legitimacy of the state, stripping away one basis of its hegemonic authority. Foucault argues that this is not simply a symbolic act, nor activist public relations providing convincing imagery for the media, but in fact an interruption of a fundamental part of the state's "technology of power."<sup>82</sup>

Butler qualifies her remarks by saying that protest can have this effect *when* the state is a violent one, without legal recourse for its victims. She is interested in anarchism as a practice that can disrupt this type of regime, where it exists. Extending this analysis, we might observe that an anarchist analysis of power would argue that in fact *all* states rely on actual material and physical violence, perceived violence, and the threat of violence for their very existence.<sup>83</sup> In particular, we argue that a Foucauldian dynamic of state brutality is increasingly playing out in Western industrialized countries enacting extreme neoliberal policies, amplified or exemplified by practices that are based on, exceed, or even contravene national and international legal frameworks (e.g., the recent police-instigated murder of 43 student activists in Mexico<sup>84</sup>). In this context, other types of relationships between the state and subjects, such as provision of basic social services, are breaking down, even as the foundation of state power in material violence against the body is increasingly exposed. This violence can at times be effective in maintaining order: an activist interviewed regarding police violence in Spain, for example, stated, "They say that the movements are losing force, but the reality is that people are scared."<sup>85</sup> However, we might observe that these acts of brutality, for example, attacks by police on public demonstrations, can also inadvertently delegitimize the state by exposing how

81 Heckert, "On Anarchism: An Interview with Judith Butler," 94.

82 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 23.

83 Cf. P. Gelderloos, *How Nonviolence Protects the State* (New York: South End, 2007).

84 F. Goldman, "Crisis in Mexico: The Disappearance of the Forty-Three," *The New Yorker*, 24 Oct. 2014.

85 A. Kassam, "Spain Restricting People's Right to Protest, Amnesty Report Finds," *The Guardian*, 24 Apr. 2014.

the law relies on (and brutalizes) a fearful body. The state and its enforcers become hard to distinguish from the criminals they are purportedly pursuing; in some instances the alleged criminals seem much less of a threat to the social order, less violent, and less reliant on the fearful body.

This dynamic played out, for example, in the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York City in 2011–2012, student strikes in Quebec and Chile in the same period, and anti-austerity protests in Greece and Spain after the 2008 economic crash.<sup>86</sup> Protest violence is a spectacle, but often public debate then shifts to consider whose actions are criminal, sometimes leading to increased support for activists. In other words, a constant barrage of mainstream media images representing state-sanctioned police violence against a democratic assembly of groups and individuals engaged in civic action can reveal the fact that it is the state that is breaking the law, or that the laws are unjust, thereby precipitating additional support for the issue at hand. The visibility of state violence enacted upon the body in protest, perhaps counterintuitively, can galvanize support for that protest, bringing more bodies into the streets.

The strategic use of nudity in protests can also highlight the vulnerability—and simultaneous power—of the body against state violence. In some cases nudity in protest is simply to draw media attention but in others it serves a political purpose of its own. For example, striking students in Montreal organized several “nude” protests (in reality, they were semi-clothed to remain within the law), which were mixed gender and relatively non-sexual. Quotes from participants illustrate the goal of contrasting the naked body with state power: “We want the same transparency from the government as we are symbolically showing today,” one told CTV Montreal. “I’m walking the most pacifically I can, which is naked,” said another.<sup>87</sup> This strategy connects to what Magnet and Rodgers call the “architecture of nudity.”<sup>88</sup> When the state requires that we strip naked to be subjected to surveillance or sexual assault at borders or in prisons, then reversing this process, whereby activists strip ourselves naked and force the state to see our vulnerable bodies, is a strong reclaiming of not just public

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86 L. Penny, “Occupy Wall Street: Police Violence Reveals a Corrupt System,” *The Guardian*, 15 Nov. 15, 2011; R. Séguin and K. Mackrael, “11 Injured, Including 4 Police Officers, as Quebec Student Protest Turns Violent,” *The Globe and Mail*, 4 May 2012; M. Hernandez, M. Colomera, and A. Piquer, “It’s Like We’re Back to the Pinochet Era,” *France 24*, 29 Aug. 2011; Reporters Without Borders, “RBW Condemns Impunity for Police Violence Against Journalists” (press release), 11 Dec. 2014.

87 CTV News Montreal, “Tuition Protest: Near-naked March, CLASSE Demands, Student Votes,” 3 May 2012.

88 Magnet and Rodgers, 105.

space, and expressions of gender and sexuality, but also the very embodiment of protest and resistance against the surveillant systems of control. At stake is not whose bodies are stripped naked, but rather how power is embedded and embodied within the architecture of nudity. The shared festive experience of activists protesting in fun if scanty outfits is a horizontal expression of collectively expressed shared power. Collective self-expression of nudity reveals the hiddenness of state power and the lack of transparency of governments. It is also a profound act of collective bodily autonomy, through its uncoerced, consenting, and desexualized carnivalesque attitude, in stark contrast to the highly sexualized and nonconsensual strip searches, both physical and virtual, at airports and in prisons.

Whether state and police brutality become counterproductive, rallying social movement actors against them, may depend on the capacity of groups and individuals in a society to recognize violence against others as real, material, physical violence against human bodies. The dynamic described here tends to emerge most often when bodies seen in dominant culture as fully human and inherently nonthreatening (i.e., white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, middle-class, and/or children or seniors) are attacked. As Butler observes in another interview, the state by no means loses legitimacy in dominant culture by attacking those who have already been dehumanized:

These forms of institutionalized destitution and inequality are reproduced through these daily encounters—the disproportionate numbers of minorities stopped and detained by the police, and the rising number of those who fall victim to police violence. The figure of the Black person as threat, as criminal, as someone who is, no matter where he is going, already-on-the-way-to-prison, conditions these pre-emptive strikes, attributing lethal aggression to the very figure who suffers it most. The lives taken in this way are not lives worth grieving; they belong to the increasing number of those who are understood as ungrievable, whose lives are thought not to be worth preserving.<sup>89</sup>

In other words, the response of the public to police brutality tends to ignore the daily physical and material oppressions of poverty, rape, racial profiling, police killings, and so forth, explained away through victim blaming, which can only take place through an always-already sociocultural process of dehumanization of the racialized, gendered, impoverished, or subaltern “other.” At stake here,

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89 J. Butler, quoted in G. Yancy, “What’s Wrong With ‘All Lives Matter?’” *New York Times*, 12 Jan. 2015.



then, is who has access to embody the citizen in protest? How might a queer anarchist-feminist approach to theories and practices of resistance interrupt this unequal assignment of the right to a consensual architecture of nudity?

### Queer Anarchist Spaces: Liberations of the Embodied Subject

Jeppesen argues that there is a particular queer anarchist approach to inhabiting and creating spaces through alternative forms of embodiment.<sup>90</sup> In these practices, bodily expression and sexualities can create more liberatory experiences and relationships. Below, we outline the connections queer anarchist-feminists make between spaces of sexual, expressive, and emotional liberation for the body and liberation in society at large. We also present some examples of what these spaces look like in practice.

Heckert argues, "Sexuality is not simply a personal or private concern; it is also a public (political) issue."<sup>91</sup> He calls attention to the political importance of sexual liberation in developing a society that is cooperative rather than competitive, that is liberatory rather than oppressive, and that practices values such as sharing, listening, and consent: "Discomfort, fear and obsession with bodies, lust, emotions and queerness are central to the maintenance of this system of dualist thought and thus to the basis of our selves, our values and our institutions."<sup>92</sup> Heckert further argues that the binaries themselves are a root problem, whereby oppositional forces often tend to reify the very "other" in the binary that they were attempting to resist. Activist practices of liberatory sexualities are thus fostered by queer anarchist-feminists to challenge oppressive norms not by confronting them directly but by creating alternatively valued spaces.

The range of affective, intimate, and sexual expression considered acceptable in queer anarchist counterpublics, including queer dance parties, sex parties, Queeruption events, or Gay Shame parades is exceptional. Affective norms, including the distance we are taught to place between self and other in terms of both emotional expression and consensual touching, are called into question in daily anarchist social practices, overflowing into the ways we express ourselves. Radical "movements around gender and sexuality seek to transform fundamental styles of embodiment, identity and social relations—

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90 S. Jeppesen, "Queer Anarchist Autonomous Zones and Publics: Direct Action Vomiting Against Homonormative Consumerism," *Sexualities* 13, no. 4 (2010): 463–478.

91 Heckert, "On Anarchism: An Interview with Judith Butler," 94.

92 Ibid., 93.

including their unconscious manifestations, the vision of the good life embedded in them, and the habitus by which people continue to understand their selves or bodies as public or private.”<sup>93</sup> Both the public/private and the pride/shame binaries are interrupted in these spaces. For example, Michael Bronski figures joy (rather than pride or display) as the opposite of shame. He argues that queer radicals are “creating a new culture ... that will once again attempt to ignite our imaginations, spark our sexuality and creativity and replace shame with joy.”<sup>94</sup> Unlike the pride associated specifically with coming out publicly as queer, joy can be experienced in a range of types of spaces, including privately, in intimate relationships, in sexual contexts, with friends and in groups, as well as publicly, at events or in queer autonomous spaces.

Thinking through practices engaged in the joyful celebration of the body and sexuality extends queer theory beyond the well-developed literature on the public versus the private. Queer theories and practices challenge the social norms of surveillant social control of public and private bodies with the goal of liberating or freeing the body from the many kinds of social constraints by which it is circumscribed. These constraints have long been challenged by queer anarchists in building queer autonomous publics. In an autonomous public, participants challenge hegemony beyond a delimited counterculture without allowing resistance to become a disempowered or marginalized position. An autonomous public is grounded in the anarchist principle of non-membership—there is no official list of group members and anyone can join by participating. Autonomous publics are open spaces, open groups, and open discourses. They are based on complex associations, networks, connections, and resistances beyond identity, drawing from and producing global social movements. Autonomous publics forge new modes of social organization based on collective needs and desires derived from shared cultural values such as anti-oppression politics, cooperation, sustainability, mutual respect, mutual aid, consent, consensus, creativity, inspiration, joy, liberation, and revolution.

Queeruption's sex parties and other radical queer sex parties are exactly such spaces. As Jeppesen argues, “the body does not ‘naturally’ orient itself toward the privacy of sexuality”<sup>95</sup>; this behavior is a culturally conditioned kind of shame, wherein some sexualities are shameful and most sexual practices are practiced in cloistered private spaces.<sup>96</sup> The orientations of the body however,

93 M. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 51.

94 M. Bronski, Foreword to P. Moore, *Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sexuality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), xx.

95 Jeppesen, “Queer Anarchist Autonomous Zones,” 465.

96 *Ibid.*, 463–478.

might more healthily be oriented “toward a proliferation of public sensualities and sexualities”<sup>97</sup> without shame or pride. The public/private division does not hold in queer anarchist practices. Bodies engaged in liberatory unlearning of sexual norms and consensual sexual play can be both private and public at once, or neither, as these bodies so choose. Radical queer sex parties—where a range of forms of sex play among a range of consenting participants takes place—are spaces that offer a possible contribution to this liberatory process.

Queeruption overall is one such intentionally produced space. According to their 2004 infozine, “The first Queeruption happened in the spring of 1998, when about a hundred queers spent a weekend together in a squatted building in South London ... [at] a free DIY radical queer gathering.”<sup>98</sup> Like Reclaim the Streets, an anarchist street festival organized at different times all over the world since its inception in London in 1995, “Every Queeruption is a little different from the last one, shaped by the people who plan it, the community that makes it happen, and the possibilities of each new location.”<sup>99</sup> From being dubbed an *encuentro* (alluding to the “first *encuentro* against neoliberalism and for humanity” held in Mexico in 1995, hosted by the Zapatistas), to a gathering focused on politics and sex, to a squatted campout,<sup>100</sup> “Past queeruptions have included shared vegan meals, political discussions, direct actions, skill-shares, workshops, bands, spoken word, dressup and cabaret, dance parties, bands, film screenings, radical sex, spontaneous haircuts, and more.”<sup>101</sup> The varied commitments, actions, and values that are embodied and enacted within Queeruption encounters demonstrate the complexities of queer autonomous organizing and the importance of spaces for liberated sexualities. Bodies can therefore exist outside the surveillant systems of social control in these liminal spaces where interactions are based on consent and horizontal power sharing.

Gavin Brown critiques corporate-run LGBTQ spaces as spaces where surveillance and authoritarian capitalism are active: “Through an engagement with the commercial gay scene, people consume products and experiences that confirm their identity as ‘gay,’”<sup>102</sup> and through this capitalist surveillant social control, “social relations of production, of ‘doing,’ are converted into ‘being’ (in

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97 Ibid., 466.

98 Queeruption, *Queerewind* (London, 2004), 1–2, <http://www.queeruption.org>.

99 Ibid., 2.

100 Ibid., 3.

101 Ibid., 2.

102 G. Brown, “Mutinous Eruptions: Autonomous Spaces of Radical Queer Activism,” *Environment and Planning A* 39 (2007): 2685.

this case, *being gay*).<sup>103</sup> In queer autonomous zones, by contrast, for Brown, geographies of pleasure and liberation from not just heteronormativity but also capitalism and homonormativity are put into play and “offer room for sexual dissidents and gender outlaws to exist on their own terms.”<sup>104</sup> Unlike surveillant social control, queer anarchism as practiced at Queeruption “is more of a process of trying to put into practice a set of ethical modes of engagement with sexual and gender difference than a simple identity category.”<sup>105</sup>

Similarly, Gay Shame activists created queer anarchist spaces in San Francisco and New York City that were less focused on sexual practices and more attuned to artistic expression relating to sexualities and genders, with space for bands, art work, spoken word, theater performances, dressing up, and other creative practices. They also emphasized creation of a safe(r) space for people to be openly LGBTQ, challenge gender and sexuality binaries, and resist the capitalist coercive pressure toward consumerism by providing alternatives such as bartering, trading, and sharing.<sup>106</sup> It is this set of social practices and processes based on alternative ethical values, similar to what was revealed in the naked marches during the Montreal student strike, that provides space for embodied challenges to capitalist heteronormativity through reclaiming and sexualizing spaces for the creation and practice of radical respectful collective bodily autonomy. Therefore, queer anarchism “must move beyond simple transgression and incorporate its ethical goals (for example cooperative, non-hierarchical, sex-positive relationships).”<sup>107</sup> Indeed it is precisely the absence of these kinds of ethical principles, to which Foucault referred, that allows the public to see state violence, and creates the potential for public revolt. Therefore, Queeruption and Gay Shame serve as two examples of queer autonomous spaces that do not just reverse the hierarchy of sexualities, but rather deconstruct the binary, creating a third space that favors and practices ethical, collective, engaged, consensual sexual autonomy in as diverse a set of forms as anyone at the event or in the space might imagine. Paired with embodied protest that reveals the inherent violence of the state, these two types of spaces are powerful complementary modes of queer autonomous direct action organizing. If surveillance takes place in such settings, then, perhaps it does not

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103 Ibid., 2687.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., 2685.

106 M. Bernstein Sycamore, ed., *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* (Berkeley, Calif.: Soft Skull, 2008), 238–241.

107 Brown, “Mutinuous Eruptions,” 2685.

ultimately engender social control, but rather transparency and accountability to this set of ethical values and norms.

### Conclusions: Anarchist-feminist Surveillance Theory

What then can we learn from a queer anarchist-feminist approach to surveillance, and what are some of the limitations to this intervention? First, as Koskela argues, it is key to note that “surveillance is also relational. What is considered appropriate behavior varies both according to time and place and in relation to personal qualities such as gender, sexuality, age, race and color.”<sup>108</sup> Two things emerge from this observation. First, surveillance itself can be used to exploit, target, abuse, and otherwise subject the object of its gaze to various forms of violence; however, it can also be used to create greater accountability and transparency to alternative values. Second, surveillance theory must account for interlocking systems of oppression. These two observations are discussed below.

Many theorists and activist practices discussed here observe that sexuality does not exist as an isolated identity, but rather is experienced, practiced, and represented in relation to and sometimes under the surveillant social control of numerous interlocking systems of oppression. Magnet and Rodgers draw attention to the “stratification of mobilities in ways connected to gender, race and class identities, from the regulation of sexuality to the institutionalized scrutiny of those living in poverty,”<sup>109</sup> emphasizing how multiple systems of oppression operate institutionally and particularly at borders, controlling or limiting the mobility of certain people, while facilitating or fast-tracking others.

Davis and Dent also argue that activists are challenging “the socially destructive business of imprisonment—the links between the corporate economy and the punishment industry under globalization,”<sup>110</sup> by understanding that the racist, gendered, and sexualized surveillant social control systems in prisons intersect with neoliberal capitalist globalization and colonialism. They suggest that “There is a very specific political economy of the prison that brings the intersections of gender and race, colonialism and capitalism, into view.”<sup>111</sup>

Melissa White also suggests that the no-border politics of queer migration moves “beyond the twin logics of rights and representation to challenge the

108 Koskela, “You Shouldn’t Wear that ‘Body,’” 52.

109 Magnet and Rodgers, “Stripping for the State,” 103.

110 Davis and Dent, “Prison as a Border,” 1235–1236.

111 Ibid., 1237.

very legitimacy of the nation-state and its immigration and border security regimes,"<sup>112</sup> focusing on the intersectional oppressions of queerness and immigrant status, and how alternative artistic practices provide representational strategies for challenging these logics. Therefore, we argue that intersectional analysis is key to a queer anarchist feminist understanding of surveillance; moreover, future work should explore intersections of critical disability studies with sexualities in the context of borders, prisons, protests, and activist spaces, as addressed by activists, artists, and academics such as Loree Erickson.<sup>113</sup>

Finally, Mason and Magnet argue that "less attention has been concentrated on intersectional feminist approaches to surveillance that examine its relationship to racisms, sexism, ableisms, and homo and trans-phobias."<sup>114</sup> This last, transphobia, or the politics of transgender and transsexual bodies under surveillance, is another avenue of research that bears promise, and has been addressed through art and activism, for example through *Genderpoo* and other work by Coco Riot.<sup>115</sup>

It is therefore clear that any politics of sexuality from a queer anarchist-feminist perspective will need to more fully account for these and other intersectional systems of oppression and privilege (not all of which are identity-based)—queerness, gender, sexuality, disability, race, ethnicity, immigration status, capitalism, globalization, colonialism, religion, prisons, borders, nation-states, police brutality, war, climate change, ecologies, food politics, and the environment.

The analysis in this chapter has revealed that surveillance is not technologically deterministic but rather it is part of what Slack and Wise call technological culture—the enmeshed sites of culture in which it is impossible to extract the technologies from the processes and practices.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, our argument is not that all surveillance is negative, or that we should eliminate all forms of surveillance. Rather, we must consider a way forward by claiming space and agency with our bodies, sometimes by reversing the imposed relations of surveillant systems of social control, with two objectives in mind: The first is to expose the inherent violence in these surveillant social control systems in order to reveal the violence embedded in institutions such as the state and capitalism, particularly how they police, strip naked, and invade

112 M. White, "Documenting the Undocumented," *Sexualities* 17, no. 8 (2014): 977.

113 See <http://www.femmegimp.org>.

114 C. Mason and S. Magnet, "Surveillance Studies and Violence Against Women," *Surveillance and Society* 10, no. 2 (2012): 107.

115 See <http://www.cocoriot.com>.

116 J. Slack and J. Wise, *Culture and Technology: A Primer* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

sexualized and gendered bodies. The second is to reclaim surveillance in an ethical framework so that it can be used to create horizontal relationships of equality, respect, consent, and consensus.

Addressing the first objective, Koskela argues that disrupting or appropriating surveillance systems and subverting their violent control can be liberating. These practices might include self-camming, cop watching, surveillance camera theater, and the like. In this context she suggests that "people sometimes willingly subject themselves to a camera's gaze, turning surveillance into spectacle. One potential reason for this development might be that people are weary of being passive targets of an ever-increasing surveillance and instead seek to play a more active role in producing, circulating and consuming visual material."<sup>117</sup> Although the material is still produced by surveillant systems, those subjects represented for the gaze of the watcher are taking control over their own representations and circulating them intentionally with objectives and political analyses directly at odds with those of the camera owners and operators.

In self-camming "the female body is presented as something to be seen, but within a setting regulated by the person who is seen, which contrasts markedly with the normal operation of surveillance or harassing looks on the street."<sup>118</sup> People who self-cam are resisting dominant culturally embedded notions of modesty (feminine/gender) and shame (queer/sexuality), as well as disrupting the public/private and secure/threatened boundaries.<sup>119</sup> Thus, "as the practices of surveillance have become dispersed, decentralized and overlapping, they also often extend beyond the control of formal organizations."<sup>120</sup> Koskela refers to this as a "democratization of surveillance,"<sup>121</sup> whereby control of images and other forms of data are wrested away from the nation-state and corporations by precisely those subjects they would seek to control. This is an example of grassroots resistance that does not seek legitimation by the state but rather creates its own political spaces with oppositional or alternative values. Koskela suggests that "there is a continuing need for more research on the connections between gender, surveillance and other forms of power on the gendered and sexualized emotions and experiences under surveillance, and on new creative forms of resistance."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Koskela, "You Shouldn't Wear that 'Body,'" 54.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

One particularly anarchist-feminist approach that creates accountability through mutually consensual surveillance of all involved is a practice known as the fishbowl. Kristina Weaver describes this kind of liberatory space as an organized discussion format or process for exploring complex ideas and experiences in a collective, workshop, or other group setting. The fishbowl is a process where four chairs are placed in the center of the room. Three speakers occupy three of the four chairs and discuss the given topic, with the remaining participants watching and engaging in active listening. Any participant who wants to speak in the discussion can move to occupy the fourth chair, with one of the speakers subsequently voluntarily vacating their seat to join the non-speaking participants, leaving one chair always open.<sup>123</sup>

Weaver argues that fishbowls create a space and process in which a limited number of people can speak (although anyone may join the group of speakers if they so choose); however, by watching, we are not exercising social control but rather listening attentively and holding each other to account for our words and actions, generating horizontal relationships of care.<sup>124</sup> Moreover it creates pleasure in the creation of a ring of fellowship, participants taking a genuine interest in one another, a sense of “joint ownership and mutual discovery,” and an “adventure in self-facilitated sharing.”<sup>125</sup> We can thus understand fishbowls as the opposite of the panopticon: rather than everyone being under surveillance or watched over by an (absent) internalized authoritarian center, in a fishbowl, we all watch a destabilized, fluid center of constantly changing subjects and subjectivities to whom we are accountable and with whom we are in horizontal antiauthoritarian relationships of equals, relationships which are in fact constructed through the process of engagement within the fishbowl.

A fishbowl is thus a space based on a positive kind of surveillance that is about everyone watching each other to learn, share, care, co-create, explore, and experiment, which is generative of relationships of equality and mutuality. The fishbowl metaphor and practice indicates that a group is circulating together in a space in a non-hierarchical manner, with a shared goal of transparency and accountability. It enacts not the watching of many by the authoritarian one in order to discipline, but the watching of many by the many in order to free ourselves. In this model we can see that it is not surveillance itself that is bad, but rather who gleans information about whom, what is done with the information gleaned, and to what end.

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123 K. Weaver, “Afterword: On the Phenomenology of Fishbowls,” in Heckert and Cleminson, *Anarchism and Sexuality*, 225.

124 Ibid., 225–226.

125 Ibid., 226.



Related to this approach, Yasmeeen Abu-Laban argues for examining surveillance through the theoretical perspective of a feminist relational ethics of care—revealing that in fact some people will experience particular kinds of surveillance as care. While self-surveillance may result in self-limiting behaviors, such as generating bodily insecurities among women who feel compelled to continuously check their appearance in mirrors,<sup>126</sup> or putting racialized sexualities under surveillance,<sup>127</sup> accounting for empirically situated knowledges of women might lead to a different understanding of gendered experiences of surveillance. Abu-Laban argues that “the surveillant gaze(s) may be protective, mutual or discriminatory. Just as there is ambiguity with surveillance, there is also ambiguity with ‘sousveillance,’ a term used to reference more popular/democratic technologies and forms of watching.”<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, Abu-Laban suggests that the current literature on surveillance focuses nearly exclusively on individual rights rather than collective, communal, or cooperative practices. Taking a feminist approach attentive to relational ethics, she finds that several conceptual frames may reveal different potentials for surveillance; these include a focus on cooperative or interdependent relations within community, a revaluing of shared obligations of mutual care, a questioning of centralized or top-down power relations, and a desire to discover what we may do for others through shared vulnerabilities. Shifting to this framework, she has found that children and seniors find comfort in being under surveillance, as they feel protected and watched over in a positive sense.<sup>129</sup> She also provides the examples of the caring surveillance of baby monitors, and we could also add nanny cams to the list, which allow parents to keep a caring watch over their infants or toddlers from another room in the house.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, senior health monitoring systems send an automatic alert if something goes awry.<sup>131</sup> She warns, however, of the risk of abuse, in that some adult children may install unwanted monitoring systems for their parents,<sup>132</sup> and nanny cams are notoriously well represented in contemporary

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126 Y. Abu-Laban, “Gendering Surveillance Studies: The Empirical and Normative Promise of Feminist Methodology,” *Surveillance and Society* 13, no. 1 (2015): 47.

127 A. Gonzales and G. Rolison, “Social Oppression and Attitudes Toward Sexual Practices,” *Journal of Black Studies* 35, no. 6 (2005): 715–729.

128 Abu-Laban, “Gendering Surveillance Studies,” 52.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid., 53.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid.

culture as being used for nefarious sexualized and other invasive watching or surveillance objectives.

Another example might include “suicide watch,” where people at risk for serious self-harm are under the watchful eye of medical staff, although this too is sometimes against the wishes of the person being cared for and can be handled in dangerous ways that remove or restrict a person’s bodily autonomy, through restraints, unwanted medication, and the like.

The activist collective action of cop watching, whereby activist or amateur camera crews film police when they are aggressively engaging with one or more people in the streets, is also a methodology of surveillant care for the person being recorded. This tactic may be used at protests to film police behavior as well, particularly when activists are being arrested, and has been used in more than one instance to have an activist’s charges dropped. In both cases, the surveillant act offers care and protection from the state itself. For Abu-Laban, “*the idea of care* may be very easily mobilized and supported, precisely because care is a human need. Studying the idea of care would benefit from the range of insights pertaining to feminist methodology and epistemology which sensitize us to different voices, different experiences and different needs.”<sup>133</sup>

In deconstructing the gendered and sexualized uses of surveillance cameras, approaching surveillance from a queer anarchist-feminist perspective, we have revealed some limitations in surveillance studies which often critique relations of inequality in surveillance without critiquing the inherent violence of nation-state borders and prisons or calling for their abolition. We have demonstrated how many queer, feminist, and anarchist activists have reversed the power operations of state and corporate surveillance to challenge relations of fear and to create autonomous spaces that provide for collective experiences of bodily autonomy within a negotiated and consensual set of values, creating horizontal relationships of equality through mutual surveillance and accountability. We argue that there are some possibilities for technologies of surveillant care, warning of the potential for co-optation, control, or paternalism within these frameworks if careful attention is not paid to the purpose and processes of surveillance.

In this chapter, we have made a preliminary attempt to pose the following question: what freedoms do we have and what kinds of actions, spaces, practices, and processes can we create in order to control our own bodies and lives within the current regime of truth regarding surveillance, including the panopticon of state surveillance, social sorting that intensifies inequities, and social control that not only limits from without but also creates self-limiting

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133 Ibid., 54.

behaviors within society? We acknowledge that this is the first attempt to bring an anarchist-feminist analysis to the discipline of surveillance studies, and as such it is partial and incomplete. Future research in this area has the potential to greatly benefit marginalized subjects, activists, and other people with social justice objectives; additionally, it has the potential to benefit from their experiences, and to include subaltern and subjugated knowledges in its critical antiauthoritarian approaches.

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# Anarchism and Feminism

*Ruth Kinna*

## Introduction

The conjunction of anarchism and feminism can be understood in multiple ways and in anarchist movement politics the intended meaning is neither fixed nor always specified. Anarchist feminists might be anarchists sympathetic to feminism or feminists for whom anarchism is a necessary corollary of their politics. They might equally regard anarchism as a vehicle for feminism or reject feminism as antithetical to anarchism, a commitment to the “first women’s bank in New York, and a lot of things within the system.”<sup>1</sup> Some anarchist feminists argue that anarchist feminism is only one of a multitude of anarchisms with adjectives. Unusually, however, the prefix takes a number of different forms—anarcho-feminist, anarcha-feminist, anarchafeminist. Questions of meaning are further complicated by the association of anarchist feminism with other descriptors. The introduction on the *Anarcha Library* site argues that the “emphasis is on gender,” adding that anarcha-feminism “is not a sect of anarchism like anarcho-syndicalism or anarcho-primitivism, for an anarcha-feminist can have affinity with these and other sects.”<sup>2</sup>

It is sometimes argued that the meaning of anarchism is grasped instinctively—“you know it when you see it,” Uri Gordon says.<sup>3</sup> Anarchist feminists often work in a similarly intuitive way, linking anarchist feminism to the commitments of those who self-identify and/or to individual practice perhaps more than is usual, even in the case in anarchism, where sub-divisional tagging is customary.<sup>4</sup> One response to the “what is” question is:

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1 J. Greenway and L. Alderson, “Anarchism and Feminism: Voices from the Seventies” (2014), <http://www.judygreenway.org.uk/wp/anarchist-feminist-interviews/>.

2 sallydarity, “What is Anarcha-Feminism?” *Anarcha Library*, <http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/what-is-anarcha-feminism-2005.html>.

3 U. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 3.

4 sallydarity, “What is Anarcha-Feminism?”.

That's a good fucking question, and one I'm not sure how to answer exactly. All I can tell you is what it means to me. Anarcha-feminism is diy, anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-sexist, sex-positive, anti-homophobic, trans-positive, queer, anti-ageist, pro-woman, pro-kid, powerful, anti-police, anti-prison, revolutionary, transformative, lots of cake, lots of fun, direct action, confrontational, personal, political, collective, zine-loving, free, grass-roots.<sup>5</sup>

The advantage of this approach is that avoids representative claims and the attribution of labels. An activist interviewed by Judy Greenway in the 1970s expressed the thrust towards anti-representational practice as "an equal right to express herself but no one else can speak for them."<sup>6</sup> In the same vein, the eighties Montreal magazine *BOA* (*Bevy of Anarcha-feminists*) removed the tag from its cover in order to avoid co-opting "the women who contributed to the magazine by attaching a label to them that they didn't choose for themselves."<sup>7</sup> Intuitive understandings also defend practice over theory-based approaches to politics. Lynne Farrow's "disinterest in theoretical speculation"<sup>8</sup> reflects a deep-seated anarchist suspicion of elitism and the rejection of policy-focused or programmatic approaches to social change. Writing in the 1970s, Farrow packaged a three-pronged rejection of Juliet Mitchell's "totalizing" Marxism, the aspiration to construct a women's liberation movement and the effort to apply social theory to the analysis of oppression as markers of anarchist feminism. Denying that the lack of "comprehensive theory" reduced anarchist feminism to the venting of "a lot of little gripes," Farrow argued that anarchist feminism was linked to a new way of theorizing that was distinctively "individualist" and "situationist": rooted in the situations from which perceived problems stemmed.<sup>9</sup> Elaine Leeder later pressed this critique to question the nature of theoretical reasoning and advocate processes which balanced conventional linear reasoning with experimental mosaic patterning.<sup>10</sup>

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5 London anarcha-feminist kolektiv, "What the Fuck is Anarcha-Feminism Anyway?" (2009), *Anarcha Library* <http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/what-fuck-is-anarcha-feminism-anyway.html>.

6 Greenway and Alderson, "Anarchism and Feminism."

7 K. Jackson, "BOA," in *Only a Beginning, An Anarchist Anthology*, ed. A. Antliff (Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004), 22.

8 L. Farrow, "Feminism as Anarchism," in *Quiet Rumours. An Anarcha-Feminist Reader*, ed. Dark Star Collective, 3rd edition (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2012), 23.

9 Ibid., 21.

10 E. Leeder, "Feminism as an Anarchist Process: The Practice of Anarcha-Feminism" (c. 1978), *Anarchist Library*, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/elaine-leeder-feminism-as-an-anarchist-process>.

The disadvantage of the intuitive approach is that it does not quite capture the range of influences active on anarchist feminism. Practice-based activism has exercised a profound influence on anarchist feminism, but academic feminism has also played a significant role in shaping contemporary anarchist feminist politics and, particularly, anarchaqueer thought.<sup>11</sup> The identification of anarchist feminism with movement norms also risks exaggerating the extent to which anarchist practice reinforces feminist commitments. Sandra Jeppesen and Holly Nazar observe that “the majority of anarchist men are (pro)feminist, anti-heteronormative, perhaps queer or trans men themselves”.<sup>12</sup> Yet the negative experiences of anarchist movement organizing suggest that a greater number of anarchists misunderstand anarchism’s pro-feminist politics and/or that anarchist principles lack clear articulation.

Anarchist literatures abound with accounts of manarchism. This describes everything from a self-obsessed reflection on the burdens of anarchist commitment<sup>13</sup> to the adoption of aggressively cis-gendered male predatory behaviors, uninvited protectionism premised on norms of dependency, sexual violence and the casual dismissal of gender politics.<sup>14</sup> Bob Black’s “Anarchy: Fable” captures manarchism’s nasty spirit.<sup>15</sup> Even if activists disagree in their diagnoses of the causes of anti-feminist anarchism and the complicity of women in oppression, the widespread existence of domineering, violent and misogynist practices in anarchist movements is widely acknowledged.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the claim that anarchist feminism is a tautology has become an important point of departure for anarchist feminist critics of anarchism. Unconvinced by this

11 S. Jeppesen and H. Nazar, “Genders and Sexualities in Anarchist Movements,” in *Bloomsbury Companion to Anarchism*, ed. R. Kinna, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 172.

12 Ibid., 167.

13 For an introduction see sallydarity, “Shit MANarchists Say,” *Anarcha*, <http://www.anarcha.org/sallydarity/whatis.php>.

14 See, for example, Down There Health Collective, *Let’s Talk About Consent, Baby* (Washington, D.C.: Down There Health Collective, 2006); *Queering Protest Sites* (c. 2011.), <https://archive.org/details/QueeringProtestSites>; M. Kolárová, *Gender in the Czech Anarchist Movement* (Prague: Subverze, 2004); Widezma, “Anarchism Meets Feminism: The Importance of Putting Theory into Practice” (2007), *Anarcha Library*, <http://anarcha.library.blogspot.co.uk/2010/10/anarchism-meets-feminism-importance-of.html>; *Why She Doesn’t Give a Fuck About Your Insurrection* (2009), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/17465339/why-she-doesnt-give-a-fuck-about-your-insurrection>; Sisters of Resistance, “A Letter to Male Activists” in *Affinity* (Black Iris Press, 2013), 49–52, <https://sistersofresistance.wordpress.com/2011/03/19/a-letter-to-male-activists/>.

15 B. Black, “Anarchy: A Fable,” in B. Black, *Friendly Fire* (New York: Autonomedia, 1992), 151–153.

16 Claudia, *Love Lies Bleeding* (London: Class Whore, 2000.).



claim, Pendleton Vandiver explains the logic: “[s]ince anarchy is opposed to all forms of domination, anarchy without feminism is not anarchy at all. Since anarchy declares itself opposed to all archy, all rulership, true anarchy is by definition opposed to patriarchy, i.e. it is, by definition, feminist.”<sup>17</sup>

The recognition of anarchism’s shortcomings have stimulated a number of important reflections about the nature of anarchist feminism. Flick Ruby’s response to the solipsistic reasoning that Vandiver outlines was to call for the adoption of a solid feminist consciousness to disrupt the “comforting cushion” that anarchist men reached for when advancing their well-rehearsed critiques of patriarchy and capitalism. Anarchist feminism described a gendered behavioral program which encouraged men to “take responsibility for the masculinity of the future” and required women to rise above the oppressions of the past.<sup>18</sup> In 1980 Kytha Kurin also argued for the absorption of feminist sensibilities in anarchism but called for struggle against the structural causes of women’s oppression, linked anarchist feminism to anarchist-communism and anarcho-syndicalism.<sup>19</sup> A third view has prioritized organizational practice and linked anarchist feminism to the creation of separate spaces. Writing in *Open Road* in 1979, Elaine Leeder observed that mixed groups of anarchist men and women lacked the “unique flavor and style” of women-only feminist groups and that the principles espoused in anarchist politics were profoundly compromised by the anti-feminist behaviors of men who professed them.<sup>20</sup> A fourth response, centering on failure of anarchist principles, encourages theoretical revision. Discomforted by the suggestion that anarchism is somehow auto-feminist, Emily Gaarder argues for the injection of feminist ideas into anarchism, links anarchist failures to address the practical concerns of women to the under-theorization of gender and patriarchy.<sup>21</sup> Stacy/sallydarity similarly looks to Judith Butler, Christine Delphy, Monique Wittig, and Collette Guillaumin to center gender theory in anarchist studies and fill out

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17 P. Vandiver, “Feminism: A Male Anarchist’s Perspective” (2010), *Anarchist Library*, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/pendleton-vandiver-feminism-a-male-anarchist-s-perspective>.

18 Flick Ruby, “Anarcha-Feminism” (2005), *Spunk Library*, <http://www.spunk.org/texts/anarcha-fem/spooio66.html>.

19 K. Kurin, “Anarcha-feminism: Why the Hyphen?” in Antliff, *Only a Beginning*, 261.

20 E. Leeder, “Anarcha-Feminism: Moving Together,” in Antliff, *Only a Beginning*, 255.

21 E. Gaarder, “Addressing Violence Against Women,” in *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*, eds. R. Amster, et al. (London: Routledge, 2009), 46.

anarchism's anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchical spirit.<sup>22</sup> Acknowledging anarchism's principled opposition to "all hierarchy and oppression," she sets out a "newer woman question" to fill the gaps in anarchism's default rejection of sexism by the adoption of "principles specific to its emphasis on feminism" and by the drawing attention to the "still necessary" task of making "gendered concerns ... central."<sup>23</sup>

These critiques of anarchism highlight some important tensions in anarchist feminist thinking. Gaader's proposal to theorize anarchism through feminism is particularly controversial because it appears to play down the concerns that some anarchists have expressed about the value of "the intellectual arts," to use Farrow's term. This chapter probes these tensions to examine anarchist feminism as a politics that has emerged through critical engagements with both anarchism and non-anarchist feminisms. As a current within anarchism, anarchist feminism is rightly linked to the writing of leading anarchist women, typically neglected in anarchist canons.<sup>24</sup> In different historical moments anarchist feminism has also emerged simultaneously as a critique of feminism and as a feminist-inspired revision of anarchism.

The argument presented here is that contemporary anarchist feminism is contextualized by a powerful historical narrative which has both marginalized anarchism within feminism and described feminism's intersection with anarchism as a transformative moment. These narratives are described by wave theory. The first section gives an account of feminist wave theory, to show how the boundaries of feminism have been constructed in ways that are neglectful of, if not antithetical to, anarchism. It then sketches two anarchist responses to wave theory, showing how activists have sought to find tools within anarchism to develop anarchist feminism or, alternatively, turned to feminism for anarchism's re-invention as an anarchist feminist politics. The final two sections examine the impact of wave narratives on contemporary anarchist feminisms and consider what the writings of prominent anarchist women contribute to anarchist feminist thinking.

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22 Stacy/sallydarity, "Anarcha-Feminism and the Newer 'Woman Question,'" in *Quiet Rumours*, 38.

23 Ibid., 37.

24 CrimethInc. Ex-Workers' Collective, "Anarcha-Feminism, Part 1: Introduction and Herstory" (podcast, 2014), <http://www.crimethinc.com/podcast/26/>. Kathy Ferguson's "Emma Goldman's Women," an online archive of neglected feminists, is one of the historical projects referred to. See <http://www.politicalscience.hawaii.edu/emmagoldman/index.html>.

### Feminism: Wave Theory and the Exclusion of Anarchism

In 1971 Sheila Rowbotham described the “rediscovery of our own history” as an essential task of the British women’s liberation movement.<sup>25</sup> The neglect of history was symptomatic of the disregard of women’s “specific interests” and its rediscovery and retelling was an important part of women’s empowerment, contributing to the advancement of those interests. More recently Clare Hemmings has re-defined the task. The challenge she sets is not to recover a lost history, as if it is possible to “tell a full story about the past”<sup>26</sup> but to reflect on the ways in which western feminists have accounted for feminism’s past.

Hemmings’ analysis is focused on feminism’s three, sometimes four phases or waves. Waves are often located in time and place and described in terms of their political character. Accordingly, first wave feminism is usually said to have its roots in eighteenth century radicalism; in America linked to rights discourses, fueled by abolitionist campaigns, and in Britain, to demands for women’s education and employment and for the liberalization of marriage laws. Both movements provided a platform and rhetoric for women’s emancipation which galvanized the turn of the century suffrage campaigns.<sup>27</sup> Sally Scholz’s introduction to feminism dates the emergence of the second wave “somewhere between 1948 and 1960” and the peak of the movement “from 1960 until the early 1990s.” Second wave feminism is an American and European movement which shifted “the scope of analysis to include aspects of women’s physical existence or experience” and “sought solidarity among all women in the experience of oppression.” Its watch word was “sisterhood.” Scholz treats each subsequent wave as a generational shift:

By the late 1960s—spurred by civil rights activism as well as union and student uprisings—feminist activity burgeoned in new directions and with heightened vigor. Feminists seeing these developments as a “next generation” of activism, called it the “second wave”. On this generation model, “third wave” is generally understood to begin in the 1990s.<sup>28</sup>

25 S. Rowbotham, Introduction to A. Kollontai, *Women Workers Struggle for their Rights*, trans. C. Britton (Bristol, U.K.: Falling Wall Press, 1971), ix.

26 C. Hemmings, “What is a Feminist Theorist Responsible For? Response to Rachel Torr,” *Feminist Theory* 8 (2007): 72.

27 M. Walters, *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

28 S.J. Scholz, *Feminism: A Beginner’s Guide*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010), 5.

While Scholz's description assumes an identity of generational change and activism, such that the public manifestation of women's activism indicates the surfacing of a new wave, the distinctive feature of third-wave feminism is that it is associated with a theory-led break with the past. In Scholz's account the third wave is "characterized by a rejection of the project of sisterhood in favor of diversity not only in identity but in subjectivity and thought itself." Equally, in the third wave feminists jettisoned the attempt to apply "traditional political theory" to women and instead worked on the elaboration of "women-centered political theory."<sup>29</sup>

Fourth wave feminism appears to be the most difficult to pin down. Scholz labels it "postfeminism," and defines it by an awareness of, and resistance to, women's objectification in global media and markets.<sup>30</sup> In Kira Cochrane's potted wave history fourth wave feminism is linked to virtual networking.

This movement follows the first-wave campaign for votes for women, which reached its height 100 years ago, the second wave women's liberation movement that blazed through the 1970s and 80s, and the third wave declared by Rebecca Walker, Alice Walker's daughter, and others, in the early 1990s. That shift from second to third wave took many important forms, but often felt broadly generational, with women defining their work as distinct from their mothers'. What's happening now feels like something new again. It's defined by technology: tools that are allowing women to build a strong, popular, reactive movement online.<sup>31</sup>

Wave theory is, of course, a convenient shorthand for a complex history and it captures major changes in the complexion of feminism. But it is not just that. It has also become a dominant frame for feminist thinking, importantly structuring feminist theoretical debate. Nancy Fraser's account of feminisms waves shows how. Feminist theory, Fraser argues, "tends to follow the zeitgeist." In its second wave, feminism emerged from the New Left and "reflected the still-potent influence of Marxism." It located "gender relations on the terrain of political economy, reproduction, and sexuality." There followed a move towards identity and sexual difference. By the 1990s, "the New Left was only a memory" and "most feminists theorists took 'the cultural turn.'" No longer focused on

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29 Ibid., 7.

30 Ibid.

31 K. Cochrane, "The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Meet the Rebel Women," *The Guardian* (10 Dec. 2013), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/fourth-wave-feminism-rebel-women>.

“labor and violence,” feminist theory was increasingly taken up with issues of identity and representation. Choosing to ignore the explicitly anti-neoliberal activism of feminist anti-globalizers,<sup>32</sup> Fraser argues that social struggles were subordinated to cultural struggles: “the politics of redistribution” gave way to the “politics of recognition.” As a result, feminism fell “prey to the zeitgeist” defined by neoliberalism.<sup>33</sup> Wave theory is integral to Fraser’s efforts to revive “the sort of socialist-feminist theorizing” that she links with the second wave.

For Hemmings these narratives of change are “motivated accounts” which reflect the interests and investments of the writers.<sup>34</sup> By relating the story of feminism in discrete waves, feminist histories have divided the past “into clear decades to provide a narrative of relentless progress or loss, proliferation or homogenization.”<sup>35</sup> Focusing on the representation of theoretical currents within feminist thought, Hemmings notes that western feminism

tells its own story as a developmental narrative, where we move from a preoccupation with unity and sameness, through identity and diversity, and on to difference and fragmentation. These shifts are broadly conceived of as corresponding to the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s respectively, and to a move from liberal, socialist and radical feminist thought to post-modern gender theory.<sup>36</sup>

The theoretical divisions that Hemmings highlights are precisely those that Scholz and Fraser formalize, descriptively in Scholz’s case, normatively in Fraser’s. Seeking to challenge their dichotomous approach, Hemmings notes that the change from the 70s is treated either as a shift from “naïve” essentialism, “through the black feminist critiques and ‘sex wars’ of the eighties to ‘difference’ in the nineties and beyond,” or as a regression “from the politicized, unified early second wave.” Feminists in this latter camp (which might include Fraser) plot the history of western feminism as a “loss of commitment to social and political change” marked by “an entry into the academy in the eighties, and thence a fragmentation into multiple feminisms and individual careers.”<sup>37</sup>

32 C. Eschle and B. Maiguashca, “Reclaiming Feminist Futures: Co-opted and Progressive Politics in a Neoliberal Age,” *Political Studies* 62 (2013): 634–651.

33 N. Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (London: Verso, 2013), 159–160.

34 Hemmings, “What is a Feminist Theorist Responsible For?,” 72.

35 C. Hemmings, “Telling Feminist Stories,” *Feminist Theory* 6 (2005): 116.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

Hemmings is interested in exposing the distorting effects of wave theory and in showing how political theories are made rigid and how their authors emerge as representatives of particular wave transformations. In the realm of political theory, the effect of wave theory is to promote the invention of what Kathy Ferguson refers to as taxonomies of positions which fix the boundaries between schools of thought, ignoring their continuities and intersections and the dynamic, creative tension that emerges from the alternative strategies that feminists have adopted in argument. From this perspective, the problem of wave theory is not that it simplifies histories or ideas by their reduction since, as Ferguson argues, reduction can be used to aid reflection and analysis. Instead it introduces “stubborn and persistent” oppositions into “thinking, writing, and acting.”<sup>38</sup>

Hemmings’ misgivings about the characterisation of post second wave feminist political theory raise broader questions about the ways in which these oppositions have operated in movement histories and in accounts of women’s activism. Perhaps inevitably, given Hemmings’ caution about the possibilities of historical reconstruction, wave theory bundles ideas, movements and practices together to produce short-hand descriptors of “feminism” which are oppositional because they are also exclusionary. Activists self-consciously riding the crest of each new wave emphasize the novelty of their politics by locating themselves in a history in which the memory of earlier radical campaigns has been sunk. In 1978, reflecting on second wave feminism, Eva Figs wrote, “we knew our message was radically different in style and content from anything that had gone before—that women’s liberation would mean men’s liberation and a whole new set of social and cultural values.”<sup>39</sup> The possibility of finding any continuity with earlier feminist visions was flatly denied.

While Hemmings warns against treating the discussion of waves (in academic feminist theory journals) as evidence of their reality, it seems that the political and conceptual debates that wave theory historicizes have contributed to the writing of feminist histories, just as they have contributed to the framing of feminist theory. According to Laura Lee Downs, feminist historians active in the period of the second wave embarked on the process of historical recovery by using frameworks and approaches inspired by it. “Moved by and often engaged in contemporary struggles around equal pay or abortion,” she argues, activist scholars writing in the 1960s and 70s “searched the past in those

38 K. Ferguson, *The Man Question: Visions of Subjectivity in the Feminist Theory* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993), 9.

39 E. Figs, “Why the Euphoria Had to Stop,” in *Women of the Revolution: Forty Years of Feminism*, ed. K. Cochrane (London: guardianbooks, 2012), 57.

fields that seemed the most immediately relevant: the struggle for the vote and for access to higher education, the history of women's industrial and agricultural labor, women's struggle to attain control over their own bodies and sexuality, the history of prostitution."<sup>40</sup> The politics of the second wave was similarly historicized. The two dominant approaches to feminist history, Downs notes, were socialist and radical. Socialist-feminists placed "understanding the articulation of class and gender" at the forefront of analysis, "adapting terms and categories of Marxist analysis—'sex-class,' 'sex struggle,' and 'patriarchal mode of production.'"<sup>41</sup> Radical feminist historians "foregrounded patriarchy" and argued that "all human societies divide social space into dichotomous and gendered realms of public and private."<sup>42</sup> This approach, which Downs believes dominated in the U.S., "imported into ... research the fundamental political premise of second-wave feminism, namely, that 'gender is the primary source of oppression in society and ... the model for all other forms of oppression,'" including race and class.<sup>43</sup>

Jeska Rees's research into the British Women's Liberation Movement reinforces Downs point: the construction of feminist history, Rees argues, reflects the dominance of trends active within movements. Whereas Downs identifies the imprint of a political division within the feminist second wave between American and British feminist scholars, Rees focuses on the battle for the soul of the British women's movement. Her contention is that "socialist feminism" has been "privileged" and "radical/revolutionary feminisms denied feminist currency." For Rees the "trajectory of this historiography mirrors that of academic women's history as it has developed in Britain since the 1970s" and that this "has been heavily influenced by socialist theory" and "produced a skewed historiography in which radical and revolutionary feminists are not represented in their own words, and where their ideas and practices are often dismissed."<sup>44</sup>

Echoing Hemmings' concerns about the oppositions that wave theory encourages in feminist theory Sally Haslanger and Nancy Tuana argue that the exclusions associated with feminist wave histories are distorting. Minority streams active within designated periods of waves are sidelined in subsequent histories. In the U.S. case, they note, "the emphasis on 'First' and 'Second' Wave

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40 L. Downs, *Writing Gender History*, 2nd edition (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 21–22.

41 *Ibid.*, 33.

42 *Ibid.*, 24.

43 *Ibid.*, 44.

44 J. Rees, "A Look Back at Anger: the Women's Liberation Movement in 1978," *Women's History Review* 19 (2010): 338.

feminism ignores the ongoing resistance to male domination between the 1920s and 1960s and the resistance outside mainstream politics, particularly by women of color and working class women.” The representative status given to movements that dominated in the UK and U.S. in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries shores up a conception of feminism that is deeply Anglocentric. The identification of waves “eclipses the fact that there has been resistance to male domination that should be considered ‘feminist’ throughout history and across cultures: i.e., feminism is not confined to a few (White) women in the West over the past century or so.”<sup>45</sup> Failing to recognize the cultural biases implicit in the modeling of feminism, wave theory simultaneously underplays the international aspect of women’s activism, the biases of the movements it privileges and, not least, the degree to which “Western women and their organizations were embedded in colonial and imperial projects.”<sup>46</sup> The analysis of Chinese feminism provides another example of the problems that Haslanger and Tuana bring to light. Important currents within Chinese feminist movements—pioneered by women, some of whom identified as anarchist—were lost in histories that searched for movements that followed the Western pattern.<sup>47</sup> The association of first wave feminism with liberalism not only resulted in the capricious dating of Chinese feminism’s origins but also in the misattribution of its “systematic textual articulation” to the two male translators of J.S. Mill and Herbert Spencer.<sup>48</sup>

The purpose of setting out the problems of wave theory is not to argue that waves have no foundation in social movement history. It would be difficult to argue that suffragettes did not capture the political ground in at the turn of the twentieth century and that feminists critical of the suffrage campaigns did not recognize this. The indifference of socialist party leaders to women’s movement activism, Alexandra Kollontai observed, was derived from a dubious assumption that the denial of rights meant that women were deemed far less valuable than men as potential propagandists of proletarian liberation. She added that the “success of the Suffragettes among women workers” was instrumental in feeding this prejudice.<sup>49</sup> Nor would it be easy to deny that the

45 S. Haslanger and N. Tuana, “Introduction to Feminism” (2002), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.mit.edu/~shaslang/papers/femintro.html#2.1>.

46 F. de Haan et al., eds., *Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2013), 3.

47 L.H. Liu, et al., eds., *The Birth of Chinese Feminism: Essential Texts in Transnational Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 7.

48 Ibid., 39.

49 Kollontai, *Women Workers Struggle for their Rights*, 31.



struggle for the vote in the late nineteenth century created divisions within women's movements that would have lasting effects on feminist politics and the ways in which feminism was subsequently articulated. In the late nineteenth century, bell hooks observes, the advantages that some white women won in the course of suffrage campaigns shaped the politics of feminism in the U.S. in significant ways. Black women in America were caught in "a double bind." The choice was either to "support women's suffrage ... allying themselves with white women activists who had publicly revealed their racism" or to "support only black male suffrage" and thereby "endorse a patriarchal social order that would grant them no political voice."<sup>50</sup>

However, in wave theory shifts in movement activism generate reductive approaches to feminism that are not illuminating. Used as a frame to tell a story about feminism's history, wave theory not only elicits an account of theoretical oppositions, constructed in ways that reflect the interests and positions of authors, as Hemmings observes, but also historicizes feminism in ways that elevate particular currents within movements as definitive.

Anarchism is not the only casualty of wave theory. Conventional accounts of first wave feminism typically airbrush Marxist feminisms from debates, too, along with the extensive debates about androgyny, sex slavery, varietism, and class-priority that the "woman question" provoked in socialist circles in the 1880s and beyond.<sup>51</sup> But the exclusion of anarchism from wave histories of feminism has left a mark on anarchist feminist thinking. The impact of wave theory on the emergence of anarchist feminism, as a contested politics within anarchism, is evident both in the apparent neglect of anarchism during the period of feminism's second wave and by the convergence of feminist wave theory with a corresponding second wave of anarchism. The result of this convergence is that the politics of anarchist feminism pulls in opposite directions, replicating major cleavages encapsulated by the shift from second to third wave feminisms.

### **Anarchism, Wave Theory and the Emergence of Anarchist Feminism**

The impact of wave theory on anarchist feminism is detectable in two very different approaches to the conceptualization of anarchist feminism. The first

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50 bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, (London: Pluto Press, 1982), 3.

51 L. Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002); S. Rowbotham, *Dreamers of a New Day: Women Who Invented the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 2010).

calls for the re-discovery of anarchism for feminism and the second uses feminism as a lens for anarchist critique.

For many activists involved in campaigns organized during the period of feminism's second wave, the issue of anarchism's exclusion from narratives of feminism was not just about the narrowness of feminism's construction, but also about the eclipse of anarchism in socialism and the drift of socialists towards forms of Marxism which anarchists understood to be at odds with their own politics. In 1971, the same year that Rowbotham counseled socialist feminists to interrogate feminism's past, a Chicago anarcho-feminist group vented its frustration with the post-Soviet era domination of Marxism in socialist circles. The problem of anarchism's exclusion in feminism, the group argued, reflected the general narrowing of socialism and the removal of anarchism from accounts of its history. The group's view, later articulated by Melbourne anarchist feminists, was that "libertarian ideology" was alone "capable of embracing a feminist world view."<sup>52</sup> The Chicago manifesto called for the rediscovery of anarchist histories to support the necessary anarchizing of feminism:

There is another entire radical tradition which has run counter to Marxist-Leninist theory and practice through all of modern radical history—from Bakunin to Kropotkin to Sophie Perovskaya to Emma Goldman to Errico Malatesta to Murray Bookchin—and that is anarchism. It is a tradition less familiar to most radicals because it has consistently been distorted and misrepresented by the more highly organized State organization and Marxist-Leninist organization.<sup>53</sup>

During the same period, Peggy Kornegger similarly argued that the disregard and distortion of anarchist politics explained anarchism's exclusion from feminism. The starting point for her celebrated essay, reprinted in the seminal anarcho-feminist anthology *Quiet Rumors*, was the realization that a "whole chunk of the past (and thus possibilities for the future) had been kept from me." Anarchism was not a ready-made politics for feminists, but Kornegger observed an instinctive anarchism in the grass roots associations, consciousness-raising and affinity groups, workshops and networks<sup>54</sup> that anarchist feminists

52 Anarchist Feminist Conference, "Anarchism and Feminism" (Melbourne, 1974), *Anarchism in Australia*, <http://www.takver.com/history/aia/aia00041.htm>.

53 Chicago Anarcho-Feminists, "An Anarcho-Feminist Manifesto," in Dark Star, *Quiet Rumours*, 15–17.

54 bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 7–8; M. Ackelsberg, *Resisting Citizenship: Feminist Essays on Politics, Community, and Democracy* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 13–25.

championed and argued that feminists had something to gain from the conscious awareness of feminism's "connections" with a politics that "has been so maligned and misinterpreted."<sup>55</sup> Carol Ehrlich made a similar case. Noting that "anarchism has veered between a bad press and none at all," she reiterated Kornegger's point about anarchism's general invisibility, and used the subdivision of feminism into radical and socialist wings to situate anarchist feminist as a horizontal, anti-authoritarian alternative. "Unlike some radical feminists" anarchist feminists "do not believe that power in the hands of women could possibly lead to a non-coercive society" and "unlike most socialist feminists, they do not believe that anything good can come out of a mass movement with a leadership elite."<sup>56</sup>

A second approach to anarchist feminism questioned the premises on which this project was based. This current within anarchism has looked to feminism rather than anarchism to conceptualize an anarchist feminist politics. The deployment of a wave history of anarchism, corresponding to feminist wave theory, significantly shaped this conceptualization.

In this current of ideas anarchism's waves correspond to feminism's waves but they are described in particular ways. Specifically, whereas feminist wave theory narrates a series of disruptions and political revisions driven by feminist critique, the equivalent history in anarchism tells a story of death and rebirth explained by political failure. In contrast to the triumphant end of first wave feminism, symbolized by the introduction of voting rights in Britain and America, first wave anarchism finishes disastrously, eclipsed by the Bolshevik revolution and subsequent dominance of Marxism, and defeated in revolutions in Germany and Spain. The crushing of the Spanish anarchists in 1939 not only signals anarchism's first wave crash but also the collapse of an ideology that was outworn. The highs and lows of anarchism are tied tightly to the fortunes of western movements, just as they are in feminism, and the theoretical shifts are presented as starkly as they are in feminist histories. But the movements within anarchism describe fundamental transformations. Above all, the rebirth of anarchism in the late 1960s is explained by the revitalizing power of external forces and not by the development of oppositional critique, as is the case in feminism's waves.

In this convergence, the emergence of second wave feminism is a defining moment for contemporary anarchism. For Cindy Milstein, 60s activism "increasingly broadened" anarchism's "lens of critique." First wave "classical anarchists" were "concerned with phenomena besides capitalism and the

55 P. Kornegger, "Anarchism: The Feminist Connection," in *Dark Star, Quiet Rumours*, 25, 26, 30.

56 C. Ehrlich, "Socialism, Anarchism and Feminism," in *Dark Star, Quiet Rumours*, 57–58.

state, whether that was militarism, sexuality, or organized religion.” They also introduced analytical “categories such as hierarchy” used widely in contemporary anarchist politics. But “such articulations were still generally subservient to a focus on capitalism and the state—much as Marxists made, and often still do, all phenomena subservient (or ‘superstructural’) to the economy (‘base’).”<sup>57</sup> Milstein identifies Bookchin’s *Ecology of Freedom* as the exemplary expression of “a more all-encompassing horizontal libertarianism.” Published in 1982, at the peak of the second wave by Scholz’s assessment, Bookchin’s “re-thinking of anarchism” points to the uniform entrenchment of the principle of class-priority across socialist doctrines. While Milstein attributes the change in anarchism to the influence of the “counterculture, New Left and autonomist movements of the long 1960s,” not especially to feminism, she credits these movements with bringing “ecology and technology ... alienation and cultural production ... sex, sexuality, gender and kinship ... white supremacy and antiracism ... ableism and ageism ... physical and mental health” to the “matrix of anarchism’s critique.”<sup>58</sup> The story Milstein tells is that anarchists were unable to fully embrace feminism because they were as hamstrung by their commitment to class and consequently unable to account adequately for non-class oppressions.

Other observers are less generous in their assessment of first wave anarchism than Milstein. Indeed, a strong current of post second-wave analysis suggests that twentieth-century anarchist feminists would find very little to help them develop a pro-feminist anarchist politics in historical anarchism, because first wave anarchism was defined by an anti-feminist malestream. The essence of the argument is that prior to the attention that second-wave profeminists devoted to it, anarchism was an anti-feminist doctrine.

This is Peter Marshall’s view. His standard reference on anarchism acknowledges that the anarchist movement attracted some important women activists<sup>59</sup> but argues that anarchist intolerance of feminism undermined their influence. The impact of the ideas of the radical women within the movement—Emma Goldman, Louise Michel, Charlotte Wilson and Voltairine de Cleyre—was belatedly felt; second wave archaeology was responsible for the transformation of anarchism.<sup>60</sup> Goldman might now be the most celebrated historical activist, rivaled only by de Cleyre, but not even she found an audience during her

57 C. Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2010), 37.

58 Ibid., 38–39.

59 M. Marsh, *Anarchist Women, 1870–1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

60 P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, (London: HarperCollins, 1992), 556.

lifetime. At the end of her career, Marshall argues, Goldman knew that she was “hopelessly out of tune with her contemporaries.”<sup>61</sup>

Sharif Gemie’s criticism of anarchism’s anti-feminism similarly spotlights the anti-feminism of historical anarchism, focusing on the shortcomings of the anarchist canon. In an influential analysis of anarchism and feminism he argues, “of the four best known political theorists” of anarchism, “only one addressed questions of sexual politics at any length.”<sup>62</sup> This was P.-J. Proudhon, a notorious anti-feminist and misogynist. However, anarchism’s failure to consider explicitly the oppression of women is not derived from the power of Proudhon’s venomous pen, or indeed, the apparent insensitivity of anarchism’s other canonical thinkers to questions of sexual politics and interpersonal relations. Gemie pinpoints anarchism’s weakness in the failure to articulate a full-bloodied or distinctive feminist politics and the vacillating support given to women’s struggles, made conditional on the reinforcement of “the counter-community’s potential.”<sup>63</sup> Anarchists endorsed feminism for as long as women anarchists did not seek to disrupt the patriarchal relations that structured oppressions in those communities.

The extent to which nineteenth century anarchist movements were resistant to feminist perspectives is a matter of debate. Gemie’s critique is based on a textual analysis of nineteenth-century anarchist writing, but his findings have been challenged.<sup>64</sup> However, the significance of his feminist critique of anarchism does not rest on an argument about the proper characterization of historical anarchist movements. Its force lies instead in his identification of a gap between nineteenth-century anarchist practice and second wave feminist theory: anarchists, Gemie argues, might have been expected to push their critique of bureaucracy and defense of community to espouse “the type of re-evaluation of private and public worlds that feminists such as [Jean Bethke] Elshtain have evoked.”<sup>65</sup> The inability or unwillingness of leading anarchists

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61 Ibid., 408.

62 S. Gemie, “Anarchism and Feminism: A Historical Survey,” *Women’s History Review* 5 (1996): 422.

63 Ibid., 435.

64 R. Cleminson, “Anarchism and Feminism,” *Women’s History Review* 7 (1998): 135–138. See also K. Shaffer, *Anarchism and Countercultural Politics in Early Twentieth Century Cuba* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2005); and K. Shaffer, *Black Flag Boricuas: Anarchism, Antiauthoritarianism, and the Left in Puerto Rico, 1897–1921* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013), chapter 6.

65 Gemie, “Anarchism and Feminism,” 422.

to do so was indicative of a pervasive belief that feminism occupied a place “outside of the normal concerns of the anarchist movement.”<sup>66</sup>

Contemporary anarchist feminism has been molded by both these approaches, rightly linked to the formative writing of leading women and fleshed out through an account of wave development that emphasizes the apparently restorative role that second wave activism had on anarchism.<sup>67</sup> But these approaches have not had the same sway, notwithstanding the publication of important histories since the 1970s that support the kinds of anarchizing projects that Kornegger and Ehrlich advocated. The next section considers how these narratives of anarchism and feminism continue to resonate in contemporary anarchist feminisms.

### Theorizing Contemporary Anarchist Feminisms

As means of understanding the dynamics of contemporary anarchist feminist movements, Caroline Kalterfleiter contends, wave theory is a faulty guide. It blunts the analysis of movement activism and the dynamic contexts in which activists operate and is ill-equipped to imagine the histories which inform activism and the extent to which “ongoing initiatives ... may actually be rooted in a conflation of experiences of days, months, years, or even a decade ago.”<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, wave theory continues to serve as a touchstone for anarchist feminist thinking and important divisions in contemporary anarchist feminism can be explained with reference to it. Arguments about class and gender, rehearsed in discussions about organizing and strategy and replicating cleavages within non-anarchist feminisms, underpin these divisions.

The discussion of waves in contemporary anarchist feminism is frequently tied to the description of movement activism and these often assume a particular complexion, linked to local anarchist politics. However, one of the strong currents in anarchist feminism is the idea that anarchist feminism has tended to follow the trajectory plotted by the waves described by other feminisms since anarchism’s second wave feminist revitalization.

Describing adjustments in Slovene movements, Ida Hiršenfelder connects second wave activism with the “aggressive ... and very violent” militancy

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66 Ibid., 432.

67 CrimethInc. Ex-Workers’ Collective, “Anarcha-Feminism, Part 1: Introduction and Herstory” (podcast); Ferguson, “Emma Goldman’s Women.”

68 C. Kaltefleiter, “Anarchy Girl Style Now: Riot Grrrl Actions and Practices,” in Amster, et al., *Contemporary Anarchist Studies*, 233.

epitomized by Valerie Solanas's *Scum Manifesto*, not the ecological, plural anti-oppression movements that Milstein depicts. Third wave feminism, Hiršenfelter contends, started from "the need to reflect" on second wave ideas, and led to the incorporation of identity politics into activism. The third wave revisions were made in the light of queer theory.<sup>69</sup> Jeppesen and Nazar tie third wave anarchist feminism to movements within anarchism, notably anarchapunk/Riot Grrrl, to changes in global politics, especially the emergence of the transnational protest movements in the late 1990s and, beyond anarchism, to the theoretical foregrounding of "the intersectionality of identities and issues."<sup>70</sup> This alignment also structures Richard Day's narrative of feminism. Invoking a novel distinction in feminism's second wave, between anti-capitalist socialist feminism and anti-state anarchy-feminism, he maps the third and fourth waves to changes in feminist theory: the third wave to black and postcolonial feminisms and the fourth to postmodern feminisms.<sup>71</sup> A similar theoretical dynamic is embedded in the grass roots activism of the Romanian anarchy-feminist project, the LoveKills Collective, which defines its aims as a rejection of second wave feminism, as "something that reinforces the gender binary and domination."<sup>72</sup>

This reading of convergence has not dented the radical edge of anarchist feminism or caused it to become bland or featureless. One of the concepts central to anarchist feminist praxis—intersectionalism—is adapted from mainstream feminism, but it assumes a particular spirit when used as a tool for self-organizing. Uri Gordon deploys it to describe processes of movement building and the generation of theory from below.<sup>73</sup> Sandra Jeppesen uses intersectionalist critique to stimulate the adoption and development of pro-feminist ethics. These ethics, which are not specifically anti-capitalist, describe the meta-principles of anarchist feminist organizing. They supplement the anti-authoritarian and non-hierarchical practices that Jo Freeman described pejoratively as structureless,<sup>74</sup> with a prefigurative commitment to

69 T. Hvala, "An Interview with Ida Hiršenfelter, Editor of Sektor Ž, Feminist Radio Show on Radio Študent, Ljubljana, Slovenia" (2011), *Anarcha Library*, <http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/an-interview-with-ida-hirsenfelter.html>.

70 Jeppesen and Nazar, "Genders and Sexualities in Anarchist Movements," 170.

71 R. Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 87.

72 R. Chidgey and E. Zobl, "'Love is a Perverted Feeling...' An Email Interview with the Anarchy-Feminist LoveKills Collective, From Romania" (2009), *Anarcha Library*, <http://anarchalibrary.blogspot.co.uk/2012/11/love-is-perverted-feeling-email.html>.

73 U. Gordon, "Utopia in Contemporary Anarchism," in *Anarchism and Utopianism*, eds. L. Davis and R. Kinna (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 262.

74 J. Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," in Dark Star, *Quiet Rumours*, 68–75.

non-oppression politics and social transformation. Pro-feminist ethics favor “cooperation over competition, listening over speaking, gift or barter economics over profit, and linguistic inclusivity.” Norms include the outlawing of dominating behaviors that exhibit

sexism, racism, heterosexism, colonialism, ableisms or other forms of oppression; taking turns and being respectful when others are speaking, raising one’s hand to the on a speakers list which prioritizes marginalized and first-time speakers, twinkling or making jazz hands rather than interrupting when one likes what someone is saying; self-facilitating by being aware of how much space one is taking up and limiting interventions if speaking too often; and doing go-around check-ins where everyone in a workshop introduces themselves, says what pronoun they go by, and speaks about how they are feeling, their organizing work, and/or what they expect from the meeting or workshop; and explicitly processes for addressing dominating behaviors.<sup>75</sup>

To the extent that the conceptual tools used by some anarchist feminists in contemporary activism and critique are rooted in a narrative about anarchism’s waves, they also serve as sites for the same kind of oppositional thinking that besets feminist theorizing. Not un-coincidentally, one of the principal splits in contemporary anarchist feminist politics runs along one of feminism’s major fault lines. This is the dispute between those who defend class analysis and those who understand class approaches as reductive. This division is central to anarchist feminist critique of first wave anarchism, of post-second wave analysis of second wave feminism and implicit in the anarchist feminist embrace of third wave identity politics. Responding to Traci Harris’s call to radical feminists to “recognize the system of domination as white, capitalist and masculine,”<sup>76</sup> Red Sonja argues, defensively, against the characterization of class-politics associated with the thesis of post-second wave convergence:

There is a triple oppression and we cannot view patriarchy and white supremacy as mere contradictions, or secondary afterthought to the class analysis. They do function as “divisive mechanisms of capital” yet

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75 S. Jeppesen, et al., “The Anarchist Commons,” *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organization* 14 (2014): 880, 884.

76 T. Harris, “Redefining Radical Feminism,” *Northeastern Anarchist* 4 (2002): n.p.; T. Harris, “Radical Feminist Politics and the Ruckus” (2007), *Bring the Ruckus*, <http://www.bringtheruckus.org/?q=node/20>.



are independent of that. Nor are white supremacy, colonialism, and racism footnotes to women's oppression. We have to consistently challenge this creeping idea among white leftists or run the played out mistake of a doomed revolutionary analysis. But to discard the class lens with which we view these oppressions is to imitate multicultural liberalism which does no one any favors.<sup>77</sup>

This tension within anarchist feminism plays out in treatments of privilege and domination, where disputants alternatively explain oppression as unearned privilege accruing to all members of socially advantaged groups or as the result of inequalities rooted in uneven property ownership and wealth. It is also evident in arguments about safer spaces policies, which might be defended as instruments that combat domination or criticized as ineffective and politically divisive. And it can be found in the analysis of intersectionalism, which is represented both as a practice compatible with labor-oriented organization and as a corrective to the assumptions about the universalizing capability of the white, male working class.<sup>78</sup> It is also felt in arguments about the status of theory and practice, in debates about the character of anarchist feminist theorizing, the construction of the anarchist canon and the nature of hierarchical knowledge-production.<sup>79</sup>

The existence of tensions within movements might be seen as an indicator of their vitality. Yet there is also a danger that parties to the debates become locked in oppositional positions. To adapt Kathy Ferguson's analysis of the role that meta-theoretical questions play in shaping political arguments, protagonists to debate operate "within a certain frame" and the "frame makes claims upon our questioning that we have trouble hearing." Reading the same wave narrative in different ways, disputants to anarchist feminist debates risk becoming enframed, "seeing only the battles each practice names as worthy and missing the ways in which contending interpretations or rival deconstructions

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77 Red Sonja, "The Precarious Union of Anarchism and Feminism," (2002), *Anarchist Library*, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/red-sonja-nefac-boston-the-precious-union-of-anarchism-and-feminism-a-response-to-re-defining>.

78 "Anarchist Debates on Privilege," *Dysophia* 4 (Nov. 2013), [http://dysophia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Dysophia4\\_Complete.pdf](http://dysophia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Dysophia4_Complete.pdf).

79 J. Greenway, "The Gender Politics of Anarchist History: re/membering women, re/minding men" (2010), <http://www.judygreenway.org.uk/wp/the-gender-politics-of-anarchist-history-remembering-women-reminding-men/>; Jeppesen and Nazar, "Genders and Sexualities in Anarchist Movements," 165–166. For a contrary view, see M. Campbell, "Voltairine de Cleyre and the Anarchist Canon," in *Blasting the Canon*, ed. S. Evren and R. Kinna (New York: Punctum Books, 2013), 64–81.

cooperate ... to articulate some possibilities and silence others.”<sup>80</sup> Noticing that debates about intersectionalism are couched in terms of a choice, either class or identity politics, bell hooks argues for an approach that “allows us to focus on what is most important at a given point in time”:

if we move away from either/or thinking, and if we think, okay, every day of my life that I walk out of my house I am a combination of race, gender, class, sexual preference and religion or what have you, what gets foregrounded? I think it's crazy for us to think that people don't understand what's being foregrounded in their lives at a given point in time. Like right now, for many Americans, class is being foregrounded like never before because of the economic situation. It doesn't mean that race doesn't matter, or gender doesn't matter, but it means that ... people are losing their jobs, insurance.<sup>81</sup>

This appeal speaks to the entrenchment of oppositional thinking, even while proposing a way of addressing it. How would the generation of women active in the period of feminism's first wave attempted to analyze women's oppression as anarchists? In the final section, I sketch an approach to anarchist feminism that was not predicated on the existence of waves and outline a critique that focuses on three concepts: slavery, rights, and power.

### Slavery, Rights, and Power

The critique of slavery was neither original to anarchism nor developed exclusively by anarchists. It emerged from republican discourses and it was taken up widely by a variety of socialists in the late nineteenth-century in order to emphasize the moral bankruptcy of regimes based on class exploitation.<sup>82</sup> The critique of slavery, Selma James argues, was integral to Marx's theory of exploitation.<sup>83</sup> In anarchist writing slavery was not just deployed as a rhetorical device to demonize capitalism or expose the dependencies of workers on the

80 Ferguson, *The Man Question*, 7.

81 R. Lowens, “How Do You Practice Intersectionalism? An Interview with bell hooks” (2012), <http://nefac.net/bellhooks>.

82 S. Clark, *Living Without Domination: The Possibility of an Anarchist Utopia* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 106.

83 S. James, *Sex, Race, and Class—The Perspective of Winning: A Selection of Writings, 1952–2011* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2012), 143–160.

masters who employed them. Anarchists used slavery as an analytical tool to dissect state oppression and they pressed arguments about the transformation of chattel to wage slavery following the formal abolition of serfdom in Russia and slavery in America, in order to investigate the different ways that domination affected groups within states.

The massive appropriation of land from rural workers and the crushing tenancy arrangements that followed the 1861 Emancipation Act helped convince Peter Kropotkin and Leo Tolstoy that exploitation and oppression were best thought of as systems of slavery, driven by capitalism and maintained by state violence. Elisée Reclus took a similar lesson from his observations of American abolition. After the so-called “emancipation,” Reclus described the exploitation of the “freed labor power of former slaves” as “slavery, minus the obligation to care for the children and the elderly.” The continued existence of supremacist cultures meant that ex-slaves were not merely exploited as workers, but in special ways as black workers through the operation of segregation policies and the differential rights that freed slaves were accorded as citizens.<sup>84</sup>

The language of enslavement was also used to explore women’s oppression and to probe the particular ways that women were oppressed and exploited in capitalism and the state. In this context, too, anarchists borrowed from earlier generations of feminists. As Eugenia Delamotte argues, Voltairine de Cleyre was profoundly influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft. Disrupting the liberal feminist narrative that binds Wollstonecraft narrowly to liberal feminism and first wave suffrage campaigns, de Cleyre borrowed her “core analogy between political tyranny and men’s domination of women”<sup>85</sup> to link slavery to authority and exploitation without suggesting that it was synonymous with either. Authority, particularly vested in the Church, and exploitation, rooted in property ownership, structured the unequal power relations and systems of organization that controlled and oppressed women as subjects and workers; slavery described the condition that undermined women’s ability to disobey or resist.

Authority and exploitation shaped the spheres of women’s actions, regulating women’s relationships with those who claimed authority and/or with property owners. And these political and economic relationships were infused by a complex set of cultural norms and philosophical traditions that patterned women’s relationships with men and sealed women’s dependent status as slaves. Charlotte Wilson advanced a similar view. Women were enslaved by

84 J. Clark and C. Martin, eds., *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: Selected Writings of Elisée Reclus*, (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2013), 89–90.

85 E. Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom: Voltairine de Cleyre and the Revolution of the Mind* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 212.

laws governing property ownership and labor, but also by social practices that reduced them to pliant subjection. Thus while she called for the abolition of class rule and an end to individual monopoly of the means of production, she also advocated a minimal program of remedial change that included the introduction of "special training for girls in independence of thought, and courage in action and in acts of self-defense, to counteract the cowardice and weakness engendered in women by ages of suppression and slavery."<sup>86</sup> Victor Yarros used the same framework to explain women's enslavement. Acknowledging that the "yoke of capitalism" fell upon women "with more crushing effect" than it did on men, women were "slaves of capital" in precisely the same way. And for both men and women, slavery was regulated by law and enforced by the state. In addition, women were also "subjected to the misery of being the property, tool and plaything of man, and have neither power to protest against the use, nor remedies against the abuse, of their persons by their male masters." This form of slavery, he argued, "is sanctioned by custom, prejudice, tradition, and prevailing notions of morality and purity."<sup>87</sup>

De Cleyre's critique of slavery was underpinned what Susan Brown refers to as anarchist feminism's voluntarism and commitment to individual autonomy.<sup>88</sup> This translated into a particular understanding of liberty. Rhetorically, de Cleyre described liberty as the remedy for slavery.<sup>89</sup> Strategically, she argued for the extension of freedom by the struggle for rights. For de Cleyre, rights were powers: claims or demands advanced by direct action and decoupled from law or what she called "the vagaries of license."<sup>90</sup> The essence of de Cleyre's idea was captured in the distinction Dora Marsden drew between a "bondwoman" and a "freewoman." Bondwomen sought permission for their freedom. They "cry that a woman is an individual, and that because she is an individual she must be set free." The freewoman, in contrast was an individual: "she is free, and will act like

86 Charlotte Wilson, "The Criminal Law Amendment Act" [1885], in *Charlotte Wilson: Anarchist Essays*, ed. N. Walter (London: Freedom Press, 2000), 36.

87 Victor Yarros, "The Exchange (Partial) Between Victor and Zelm on 'The Woman Question'" [1888], in *Individualist Feminism of the Nineteenth Century: Collected Writings and Biographical Profiles*, ed. W. McElroy, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2001), 144.

88 L. Susan Brown, *The Politics of Individualism. Liberalism, Liberal Feminism, Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 107. For a reading of de Cleyre's concept of autonomy, see S. Presley, "No Authority But Oneself: The Anarchist Feminist Philosophy of Autonomy and Freedom," *Social Anarchism* 27 (2000), <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SA/en/display/338>.

89 Voltairine de Cleyre, "Sex Slavery" [1890], in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 232.

90 Voltairine de Cleyre, "New and Strange Ideas: Letter to Her Mother, December 18, 1887," in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 165.

those who are free.”<sup>91</sup> De Cleyre’s version of this concept was: “They have rights who dare maintain them.”<sup>92</sup> Women were told that they lacked the capacity to enjoy freedom: her response was that women “are not *worth* it, until we *take* it.”<sup>93</sup>

Rights could be realized proactively, or reactively. The suffrage campaign was an example of a proactive rights struggle. While anarchists bemoaned as futile the aims of campaigners, they applauded their direct actions. Rebecca Edelshohn expressed a widely held view when she wrote in *Mother Earth* of her admiration for the English suffragettes and endorsed their “methods of warfare.”<sup>94</sup> *Freedom* similarly set aside its skepticism about the value of the vote to congratulate the women who struggled for it. Their tactics demonstrated that “nothing is squeezed out of the politician unless you have a vigorous and uncompromising agitation outside Parliament.”<sup>95</sup> Reactive rights campaigns targeted individuals or groups responsible for repression, typically by violence. For de Cleyre, Sophia Petrovskaya, the assassin of Tsar Alexander II, modeled the kind of skill and dexterity that women possessed—and needed to cultivate—to protest the systematic and serious denial of their rights.<sup>96</sup> In current activism, a similar spirit animates insurrectionist anarchist feminist resistance to male violence. One group calls on women to “Kick the shit out of your rapists ... become an autonomous force that will destroy everything in its wake.”<sup>97</sup>

The struggle against slavery placed enormous burdens on women as deliverers of their own freedom. But it also opened up a broad field for action, which extended from involvement in global anti-colonial campaigns to micro-political actions that challenged everyday sexism. It also included extra-legal campaigning for legal reforms. Resisting slavery meant fighting for changes outside the framework of the legislative system, sometimes in order to bring changes in the law but on terms that the state and capitalism would struggle to accommodate. By asserting their rights, women might secure custody of their children and exclusive decision-making power to determine arrangements for

91 Dora Marsden, “Bondwomen,” *The Freewoman* 1 (23 Nov. 1911): 1–4, [http://www.modjournal.org/render.php?id=130080754546877&view=mjp\\_object](http://www.modjournal.org/render.php?id=130080754546877&view=mjp_object).

92 Voltairine de Cleyre, “The Gates of Freedom” [1891], in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 235. Ibid., 249.

94 R. Edelshohn, “Hunger Striking in America,” *Mother Earth* 9, no. 7 (Sep. 1914): 233.

95 “A Victory for Women,” *Freedom* 22, no. 226 (Feb.-Mar. 1908).

96 Voltairine de Cleyre, “The Gates of Freedom,” in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 246.

97 “A Modest Proposal From Some Crazy Bitches” (2010), *Anarcha Library*, <http://anarcha.library.blogspot.co.uk/2010/10/modest-proposal-from-some-crazy-bitches.html>.

their upbringing; full access to education and employment to release them from the servitude of domestic labor; changes in work patterns that enabled women to support themselves independently; control of their bodies, to determine their reproduction and, for Sarah Holmes, the latitude to undertake sex work. Many of these demands were advanced equally by non-anarchist women. The distinctively anarchist feature of this program was that women pressed rights as part of a commitment to continuous political change or as de Cleyre put it, borrowing Proudhon's language, a progressive struggle for justice:

I insist on this point of the progressiveness of justice, first because I do not wish you to think me a metaphysical dreamer, holding to the exploded theory that "rights" are positive, unalterable, indefinite somethings passed down from one generation to another after the fashion of an entailed estate, and come into existence in some mysterious manner at the exact moment that humanity emerges from apedom. It would be quite too difficult a matter to settle on the emerging point. I insist on the progressiveness of justice, because, however fierce my denunciation of present injustice may be, I none the less recognize it to have been the justice of the past, the highest possible condition so long as the aspiration of the general mind rose no farther ... I need the admission of the progressiveness of justice in order to ... prove my assertion that, however necessary the slavery of woman might have been, it is no longer in accord with the ideals of our present civilization.<sup>98</sup>

De Cleyre recognized that this kind of activism was centered on practices, even at one point decrying the "clouds of theory" that formed when "conditions made it impossible" to act. Nevertheless, her conception of rights pointed to a comprehensive anarchist ideal. Her critique of the "theory-rotted" who refused to think about "what can be accomplished now" was a rejection of "theory-spinning about future society,"<sup>99</sup> not a critique of utopianism. Indeed, her call to activism was directed towards the construction of alternative futures. Depicting a world populated by groups of zombie-like guardians of order and living souls determined on its subversion, de Cleyre argued:

98 Ibid., 240–241.

99 Voltairine de Cleyre, "Report of the Work of the Chicago Mexican Defense League" [1912], in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 191.

For these are dead who walk about with vengeance ... and scorn for things dark and lowly, in the odor of self-righteousness, with self-vaunting wisdom in their souls, and pride of race, and iron-shod order, and the preservation of Things that Are; walking stones are these, that cannot hear. But the living are those who seek to know, who wot not of things lowly or things high, but only of things wonderful; and who turn sorrowfully from Things that Are, hoping for Things that Maybe. If these should hear the Chain Gang chorus, seize it, make all the living hear it, see it!<sup>100</sup>

The analysis of slavery explained why women's oppression extended so comprehensively in manners, dress codes, or what de Cleyre called fashion-slavery,<sup>101</sup> and was still felt so imperfectly. It also explained why women were subject to oppression as keenly in socialist circles as they were in bourgeois society at large. Even while calling for world revolution, de Cleyre noted, anarchist men told their womenfolk to "[s]tay at home ... Be patient, obedient, submissive! Darn our socks, mend our shirts, wash our dishes, get our meals, wait on us and *mind the children!*" As Gemie notes, anarchist men were no better in applying their principles than other socialists and radicals. Indeed, the theoretical tools were sometimes used to close down feminist critique. In his debates with Sarah Holmes in the anarchist periodical *Liberty*, Yarros was quite open about the limits of the theory: women lacked the capacity to overcome their enslavement, even with the benefit of the sort of education Charlotte Wilson outlined. While he regarded Proudhon's refusal to exclude domestic relationships from anarchist analysis as "arbitrary, illogical, and contradictory of his whole philosophy," Yarros combined free love principles with Stirnerism to argue that women necessarily entered into dependent relationships with men in order to fulfill themselves sexually. Responsibility for childcare was the price women paid for this voluntary subordination.<sup>102</sup> Domestic enslavement followed.

What was the proper response to Yarros and his ilk? Rather than ignore or ditch the theory, de Cleyre opted to read it through feminist eyes and even dared invoke Proudhon, the arch-misogynist, to inspire her radicalism.

100 Volairine de Cleyre, "The Chain Gang" [1907], in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 204.

101 Voltairine de Cleyre, "Sex Slavery," in Delamotte, *Gates of Freedom*, 230.

102 McElroy, *Individualist Feminism of the Nineteenth Century*, 137.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored wave theories of feminism and anarchism to show how contemporary anarchist feminism has been influenced by activist concerns to find tools within anarchism to develop anarchist feminism or, alternatively, apply feminist theory to address serious shortcomings in anarchist politics. The analysis explains why anarchist feminism is so hard to define and why it is at least partially fractured by debates about class and identity. The critique of slavery, developed by anarchists active during the period of feminism's first wave and marginalized in historical narratives about feminism and anarchism, offers a different way of theorizing anarchist feminism, of diagnosing the causes of women's oppression and the range of actions that might be taken to combat it. This approach resonates with contemporary anarchist feminism, but theorizes practice in ways that some contemporary activists are reluctant to do. Moreover, it provides an outline idea of domination as a systematic structural hindrance which affects all social groups, while advantaging or disadvantaging members of particular groups in different ways. This conception differs from class analysis. It also diverges from intersectional approaches which treat domination more narrowly as a social power accruing from group membership and which seek to combat it by the development of non-dominating behaviors within particular organizational frameworks. Anti-slavery doctrines are compatible with intersectional approaches, but extend the repertoires of action in novel ways.

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# Anarchism and Libertarianism

*Roderick T. Long*

## Introduction

“Libertarianism,” understood as a term for a specific political ideology, originated as a synonym for anarchism, and more precisely the communist anarchism of Joseph Déjacque (1821–1864), whose use of “*libertaire*” in this sense dates to 1857<sup>1</sup>—though individualist anarchists soon picked up the term as well.<sup>2</sup> Nowadays, however, the term “libertarianism” is frequently associated, particularly in English-speaking countries, with a movement favoring free markets, private property, and economic *laissez-faire*, generally resting either on the efficiency of the price system in coordinating individuals’ plans,<sup>3</sup> or else on an ethical principle of self-ownership or non-aggression<sup>4</sup> which is taken to define individuals’ rights against forcible interference with their persons and (justly acquired) property. This is the sense in which the term “libertarian” will be employed here. (Today French actually has two words corresponding to the English libertarian: “*libertaire*,” meaning an anarchist, particularly a left-wing anarchist, and “*libertarien*,” for the free-market advocate.) It is with the relation of libertarianism (in the free-market sense) to anarchism that this chapter is concerned.

While sometimes considered a form of conservatism, libertarianism differs from typical versions of conservatism in endorsing a broad range of social liberties, and thus opposing, *e.g.*, drug laws, censorship laws, laws restricting consensual sexual activity, and the like. (Libertarians usually, though not always, differ from typical conservatives in opposing military interventionism

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1 Joseph Déjacque, *De l'être-humain mâle et femelle: Lettre à P.J. Proudhon* (New Orleans: Lamarre, 1857). Déjacque began publishing his own journal *Le Libertaire* in 1858.

2 The individualist use of the term was common among the writers for Benjamin R. Tucker's journal *Liberty* (1881–1908); see, *e.g.*, Tucker's “A Want Supplied,” *Liberty* 3, no. 13 (15 Aug. 1885): 4.

3 See, *e.g.*, F.A. Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society,” *American Economic Review* 35, no. 4 (Sept. 1945): 519–530.

4 R.T. Long, “Nonaggression Axiom,” in *The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism*, ed. R. Hamowy (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2008), 357–360.

as well.) Libertarians see their support for social freedom and their support for free markets as two sides of the same principle: the individual's freedom to do as she chooses with her own life and property, so long as she respects the right of others to do likewise with their own.

Most libertarians favor a minimal or "night-watchman" state, with functions limited to the protection of individuals' negative rights against interference, and consequently are known as "minarchists." But a large and increasingly prominent minority of libertarians favor dispensing with the state entirely, leaving the function of rights-protection instead to the competitive market. These libertarians usually claim the title of anarchist, and specifically "anarcho-capitalist" (sometimes "ancap" for short).<sup>5</sup> Their relation to the broader anarchist movement is fraught with controversy, since that movement has traditionally opposed capitalism, and sometimes even seen opposition to capitalism as an essential component of anarchism. Social anarchists in particular are strongly inclined to deny anarcho-capitalism's status as a form of anarchism; libertarians are often eager to return the favor, denying the term "libertarian" to anyone who rejects free markets.

### Can Libertarians be Anarchists?

Many of the leading grounds on which social anarchists question anarcho-capitalism's anarchist *bona fides* are usefully collected in the popular internet resource *An Anarchist FAQ*, edited by Iain McKay.<sup>6</sup> The principal charges are two. The first is that anarcho-capitalists are only pseudo-anarchists because they do not truly reject the state—since the competing protection agencies they usually favor are just so many mini-states. Anarcho-capitalists would deny this on the grounds that a state has to be a territorial monopoly; but many social anarchists

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- 5 Many free-market anarchists, though not all, repudiate electoral politics in favor of education, direct action, and building alternative institutions. U.S. Libertarian Party presidential candidates have included both anarchist and minarchists (as well as individuals who were arguably neither). Free-market anarchist ideas, of both capitalist and anti-capitalist varieties, have been dramatized (both favorably and otherwise) in science-fiction stories and novels by Eric Frank Russell, Robert A. Heinlein, C.M. Kornbluth, James Hogan, L. Neil Smith, J. Neil Schulman, Vernor Vinge, Neal Stephenson, Ken MacLeod, and Naomi Kritzer, among others.
  - 6 I. McKay, ed., *An Anarchist FAQ*, Version 13.4 (2010), <http://www.infoshop.org/AnAnarchistFAQ>. See in particular "Section F: Is 'Anarcho'-Capitalism a Type of Anarchism?" and "Section G: Is Individualistic Anarchism Capitalistic?" A hard copy of an earlier version of the FAQ has been published as I. McKay, ed., *An Anarchist FAQ*, 2 vols. (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2008–2012).

would respond that a non-territorial protection agency is still enough like a state to be condemnable on the same grounds.

The second charge is that even if anarcho-capitalists do count as anti-government, anarchism is “more than just opposition to government,” but also involves “opposition to capitalism.”<sup>7</sup> More fully, John Clark describes the “essence of anarchism” as “not the theoretical opposition to the state, but the practical and theoretical struggle against domination,” which “does not stop with a criticism of political organization” but further condemns “the authoritarian nature of economic inequality and private property, hierarchical economic structures, traditional education, the patriarchal family, class and racial discrimination, and rigid sex-and age-roles.”<sup>8</sup> While anarcho-capitalists likewise typically oppose more than the state (since they oppose all violations of the non-aggression principle, whether by state agents or private individuals), they have ordinarily—though not without exception—taken the forms of domination in Clark’s list as legitimate, either in the weaker sense of not being rights-violations and so not permissible targets of forcible interference, or in the stronger sense of not being problematic even in terms of private morality.

The strategy of exclusion-by-definition faces a problem, however. Many of the features of anarcho-capitalism to which social anarchists point as grounds for exclusion from the anarchist ranks appear to be shared by individualist anarchists generally—including Benjamin Tucker (1854–1939) and Lysander Spooner (1808–1887), doyens of the 19th-century American individualist anarchist movement. While social anarchists have many disagreements with the individualist anarchist tradition, they generally do not wish to read individualist anarchists out of the movement, and they do usually regard Tucker and Spooner in particular as genuine anarchists. And most of the individualist anarchists resemble libertarians in their enthusiasm for private property and free markets. (Max Stirner, the supposedly paradigmatic but actually fairly peripheral exemplar of individualist anarchism, is an exception.)<sup>9</sup> Indeed, individualist anarchism is one of the two principal influences on

7 Ibid., “Section F: Is ‘Anarcho’-Capitalism a Type of Anarchism?”

8 J. Clark, *The Anarchist Moment: Reflections on Culture, Nature and Power* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1983), 70, 128.

9 Max Stirner (1806–1856) defends “property” only as a kind of Hobbesian liberty-right which generates no correlative duties in others. Despite Stirner’s reputation in some circles as the “exemplary advocate of individualist anarchism” [S. Sheehan, *Anarchism* (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), 40], his influence on the individualist anarchist movement is overstated; in North America, for example, most of the major individualist anarchist thinkers owed nothing to him, while even the most prominent American Stirnerite, Benjamin Tucker, had already largely developed his individualist anarchist system before ever discovering Stirner.



anarcho-capitalism (the other being classical liberalism); and many anarcho-capitalists consider themselves part of the individualist anarchist tradition.

Although social anarchists are quick to distinguish between anarcho-capitalists and individualist anarchists, their grounds for excluding the former often seem to apply to the latter. Thus as regards the charge that competing protection agencies are so many states, many of the individualist anarchists to whom social anarchists do grant the title of “anarchist,” including Tucker and Spooner, also favored some form of competing protection agencies<sup>10</sup> and even Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), inspiration to social anarchists and individualist anarchists alike, called for the private provision of police services.<sup>11</sup> If such positions don’t disqualify these thinkers’ anarchism, it can be asked why similar positions should disqualify the anarchism of the anarcho-capitalists.

The social anarchists’ answer, typically, is that whether such institutions are consistent with anarchism or not depends on whether they are conceived as being implemented in a capitalistic context or an anti-capitalistic one.<sup>12</sup> The first charge (anarcho-capitalists don’t reject the state) thus turns out to rest on the second (anarcho-capitalists don’t reject capitalism, whereas individualist anarchists do); and so to the question of what counts as anarchist is added the question of what counts as capitalist.

What, then, is capitalism? Most anarcho-capitalists regard the term “capitalism” as interchangeable with “free market”;<sup>13</sup> by contrast, individualist anarchists (those acknowledged as anarchists by social anarchists, anyway) have generally favored what they called the “free market” while opposing what they called “capitalism.”<sup>14</sup> To what extent, then, is the “capitalism” favored by the former the same thing as the “capitalism” opposed by the latter? Presumably

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10 See, e.g., Benjamin R. Tucker, *Instead of a Book, By a Man Too Busy to Write One: A Fragmentary Exposition of Philosophical Anarchism* (New York: B.R. Tucker, 1897); Francis D. Tandy, *Voluntary Socialism: A Sketch* (Denver, Colo.: F.D. Tandy, 1896); and Lysander Spooner, *An Essay on the Trial By Jury* (Boston: Hobart & Robbins, 1852).

11 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Idée générale de la révolution au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: choix d'études sur la pratique révolutionnaire et industrielle* (Paris: Garnier, 1851).

12 McKay, *An Anarchist FAQ*, “Section F: Is ‘Anarcho’-Capitalism a Type of Anarchism?”

13 “[C]apitalism, in the classical liberal tradition, means ... a free market based on free people, i.e., voluntary exchanges of value between free individuals.” Per Bylund, “The Trouble With Socialist Anarchism,” *Mises Daily* (30 Mar. 2006), <http://mises.org/library/trouble-socialist-anarchism>.

14 “[I]f a man has labor to sell, he has a right to a free market in which to sell it ... Now, such a market has constantly been denied ... to the laborers of the entire civilized world. And the men who have denied it are the Andrew Carnegies [and the] Capitalists ... [T]ell the capitalists that the laborer is entitled to a free market, and that they, in denying it to him,

no tradition should be excluded from anarchism merely over a difference of terminology; hence it is vital to determine which differences between the groups are terminological and which are substantive—recognizing that there are likely to be some of each (as *purely* terminological disputes and *purely* substantive ones are both rare in ideological disputes), and that the precise mix between the two may vary from one individual thinker to another.

The *Anarchist FAQ*'s section on anarcho-capitalism defines "capitalism" at one point as "exploitation and private property"; at another as "interest, rent and profits"; and at another as an "an economy marked by wage labor, landlords, banking and stock markets and so hierarchy, oppression and exploitation." These definitions are by no means equivalent; moreover, none of them is going to draw a clean line between the two groups in the desired manner. The anti-capitalist individualist anarchists, too, defended private property in some form; some of them, like Tucker, adopted an occupancy-and-use standard of land ownership, and opposed interest and rent,<sup>15</sup> but others, like Spooner, took a more Lockean view of landed property, and defended interest and rent.<sup>16</sup> The anti-capitalist individualists favored banking, too—not in its current form, to be sure, but then anarcho-capitalists generally oppose banking in its current form as well. Anti-capitalist individualists opposed the wage system (i.e., a social order in which one class has no choice but to serve as hired labor for another class), but not necessarily wage labor *per se*;<sup>17</sup> and there are anarcho-capitalists who have opposed the wage system too.<sup>18</sup> Nor do all anarcho-capitalists favor

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are guilty of criminal invasion." Benjamin R. Tucker, "The Lesson of Homestead," *Liberty* 8, no. 48 (23 Jul. 1892): 2.

15 Tucker, *Instead of a Book*.

16 Lysander Spooner, *Poverty: Its Illegal Causes and Legal Cure* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1846); Lysander Spooner, *The Law of Intellectual Property* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1855).

17 "If the men who oppose wages—that is, the purchase and sale of labor—were capable of analyzing their thought and feelings, they would see that what really excites their anger is not the fact that labor is bought and sold, but the fact that one class of men are dependent for their living upon the sale of their labor, while another class of men are relieved of the necessity ... Not to abolish wages, but to make *every* man dependent upon wages and to secure to every man his *whole* wages is the aim of Anarchistic Socialism." Benjamin R. Tucker, "Should Labor be Paid or Not?" *Liberty* 5, no. 19 (28 Apr. 1888): 4.

18 See, e.g., S.E. Konkin III, *New Libertarian Manifesto* (Long Beach, Calif.: Anarchosamisdad Press, 1980), chapter 3, n. 8; D. Friedman, *The Machinery of Freedom: Guide to a Radical Capitalism*, 2nd edition (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1989), 144–145. Friedman is a self-described anarcho-capitalist; Konkin did not use the term, but given his intellectual influences—Ludwig von Mises, Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard, etc.—he would no doubt be considered one by social anarchists.

protection agencies of the standard sort, since some are pacifists who reject even defensive force.<sup>19</sup> Anarcho-capitalists of various kinds may be seen defending common property,<sup>20</sup> recognition of indigenous land claims,<sup>21</sup> and worker takeover of privileged corporations.<sup>22</sup> It's difficult to find any criterion that unambiguously sorts pro-market anarchists into sheep and goats in the manner that social anarchists seek.

This is not to deny that on the whole, those who call themselves anarcho-capitalists or who are embedded in that tradition are likelier to endorse hierarchical features of existing economies, including oligopolistic labor markets, than are the individualist anarchists to whom social anarchists point as genuine anarchists. Indeed, if social anarchists tend to exaggerate the distance between anarcho-capitalists and anti-capitalist individualists, the anarcho-capitalists for their part tend to understate it. Recall John Clark's list of the forms of domination that true anarchists oppose: "the authoritarian nature of economic inequality and private property, hierarchical economic structures, traditional education, the patriarchal family, class and racial discrimination, and rigid sex-and age-roles." While anti-capitalist individualist anarchists would generally disagree with private property's inclusion on that list,<sup>23</sup> most of them would agree in opposing the other listed phenomena, whereas most self-described anarcho-capitalists would not.

All the same, the disagreement between anarcho-capitalists and anti-capitalist individualists seems to run deeper for social anarchists than it does for the anti-capitalist individualists themselves. In an early work by Voltairine de Cleyre (1866–1912) and Rachele Yarros (1869–1946), both at that time identifying as individualist anarchists, the authors acknowledge that their position,

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- 19 See, e.g., R. LeFevre, *The Nature of Man and His Government* (Caldwell, Id.: Caxton Printers, 1959); R.P. Murphy, "On Pacifism (Part III of III)," *Free Advice* (6 May 2011), <http://consultingbyrpm.com/blog/2011/05/on-pacifism-part-iii-of-iii.html>. Murphy is a self-described anarcho-capitalist; LeFevre did not use the term, but is generally considered one.
- 20 R.G. Holcombe, "Common Property in Anarcho-Capitalism," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 19, no. 2 (2005): 3–29.
- 21 M.N. Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982), chapters 10–11.
- 22 M.N. Rothbard, "Confiscation and the Homestead Principle," *Libertarian Forum* 1, no. 6 (15 Jun. 1969): 3–4.
- 23 It may be objected that an occupancy-and-use theory of land tenure does not countenance "private property" in the relevant sense. Perhaps not, but not all anti-capitalist individualists have been occupancy-and-use theorists; indeed, Spooner's views on property in land do not differ significantly from those of most anarcho-capitalists. (And on the issue of intellectual property, Spooner is if anything *more* "capitalistic" than many anarcho-capitalists.)

despite its opposition to the capitalist class's monopoly of the means of production, will still look to anarcho-communists like "capitalistic anarchism" (probably the earliest occurrence of such a phrase), and they answer that they have no objection to having their position so labeled, regarding mere terminology as "indifferent."<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Tucker, for his part, predicted that anarchism would undermine capitalist exploitation, but he saw the connection between the two as causal rather than definitional, and acknowledged that if he had to choose between individual liberty and a more equitable distribution of wealth, he would choose liberty—since what anarchism does for liberty is sufficient to justify it, apart from its economic effects, although the latter are needed to make it fully inspiring.<sup>25</sup> Or, in his more succinct phrasing elsewhere: "*Equality if we can get it, but Liberty at any rate!*"<sup>26</sup> While opposing interest, Tucker noted that he had "no other case against interest than that it cannot appear (except sporadically) under free conditions," and that he would cease to oppose interest if he could be convinced "that interest can persist where free competition prevails."<sup>27</sup>

And just as Tucker expected and predicted that genuinely free markets would *undermine* capitalist institutions, but did not make his support for *laissez-faire* conditional on the accuracy of this prediction, so most anarcho-capitalists expect and predict that capitalist institutions will *persist* under genuinely free markets, but likewise do not make their support for *laissez-faire* conditional on the accuracy of this prediction. For example, anarcho-capitalist Stephan Kinsella writes: "if we set up a private property order, and your mutual aid societies, coops, whatever succeed—fine by me. I just don't think they will."<sup>28</sup>

When two schools of thought agree on abolishing the state and enshrining individual liberty, with one expecting this to abolish capitalist institutions, but willing to accept it if it doesn't, and the other expecting this to maintain and extend capitalist institutions, but likewise willing to accept it if it doesn't, it's difficult to interpret their disagreement as one between anarchists and non-anarchists, rather than between one anarchist school and another.

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24 Rosa Slobodinsky and Voltairine de Cleyre, "The Individualist and the Communist: A Dialogue," *The Twentieth Century* 6, no. 25 (18 Jun. 1891): 3–6. "Rosa Slobodinsky" was the pseudonym of Rachele Yarros, whose husband Victor S. Yarros (1865–1956) was a frequent contributor to *Liberty*.

25 Benjamin R. Tucker, "Why I Am An Anarchist," *The Twentieth Century* 4, no. 22 (29 May 1890): 5–6.

26 Benjamin R. Tucker, "Neglected Factors in the Rent Problem," *Liberty* 10, no. 16 (15. Dec. 1894), 4.

27 Benjamin R. Tucker, Editorial, *Liberty* 10, no. 16 (15. Dec. 1894): 4.

28 S. Kinsella, "Left-Libertarians Admit Opposition to 'Capitalism' is Substantive," *Libertarian Standard* (22 Apr. 2010), <http://libertarianstandard.com/2010/04/22/left-libertarians-admit-opposition-to-capitalism-is-substantive>.

Acknowledging individualist anarchism's continuity with classical liberalism, Tucker called himself and his colleagues "unterrified Jeffersonian Democrats," and their program "the logical carrying out of the Manchester doctrine"—albeit charging the Manchester liberals with being "inconsistent" in championing "liberty to compete with the laborer in order to reduce his wages," but not "liberty to compete with the capitalist in order to reduce his usury."<sup>29</sup> Tucker also hailed antistatist classical liberal thinkers like Auberon Herbert (1838–1906), Wordsworth Donisthorpe (1847–1914), and Gustave de Molinari (1819–1912)—the forerunners of today's anarcho-capitalists—as fellow anarchists, despite their largely "capitalistic" views on rent, profit, interest, and the wage system.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the only antistatist thinkers Tucker refused to recognize as fellow anarchists were the anarcho-*communists*,<sup>31</sup> though most individualist anarchists have happily not followed him in this reverse exclusion.

On the contrary, contemporary anti-capitalist individualist anarchists such as Kevin Carson draw readily on both free-market libertarian thinkers like anarcho-capitalist Murray Rothbard (1926–1995) and minarchist Chris Matthew Sciabarra, and anti-market social anarchist thinkers like Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) and David Graeber. While agreeing with Iain McKay that "mainstream anarcho-capitalism is a pretty radical departure from classical anarchism," Carson opposes going "so far as to say an-caps can't be anarchists by definition," since "anarcho-capitalism isn't a hard and fast category," the "boundaries between an-caps and other anarchists are pretty blurry," and there are "leftish-leaning anarcho-caps ... influenced by anti-capitalist strands of classical liberalism."<sup>32</sup> While defending an occupancy-and-use standard of land tenure, Carson believes that a more Lockean approach, even the provisoless Lockeanism favored by Rothbardian anarcho-capitalists, would, if consistently applied, still produce a drastic reduction in the power of landlords.<sup>33</sup>

29 Benjamin R. Tucker, "State Socialism and Anarchism: How Far They Agree, and Wherein They Differ," *Liberty* 5, no. 16 (10 Mar. 1888): 2–3, 6.

30 Benjamin R. Tucker, "Auberon Herbert and His Work," *Liberty* 3, no. 10 (23 May 1885): 4; Benjamin R. Tucker, "A Prophecy in Course of Fulfillment," *Liberty* 5, no. 18 (14 Apr. 1888): 7; S.R. [S.H. Randall?], "An Economist on the Future Society," *Liberty* 14, no. 23 (Sept. 1904), 2. Randall's piece on Molinari appeared in a section of Tucker's periodical *Liberty* that Tucker explicitly reserved for articles with whose "central purpose and general tenor" he was in personal agreement.

31 Tucker, "State Socialism and Anarchism."

32 K.A. Carson. "You Will Be Assimilated: Resistance is Futile," *Mutualist Blog* (9 Aug. 2006), <http://mutualist.blogspot.com/2006/08/you-will-be-assimilated-resistance-is.html>.

33 K.A. Carson, "In Defense—Such As It Is—of Usufructory Land Ownership," *Bleeding Heart Libertarians* (26 Apr. 2012), <http://bleedingheartlibertarians.com/2012/04/in-defense-such-as-it-is-of-usufructory-land-ownership>.

Another contemporary anti-capitalist individualist anarchist, Anna Morgenstern, maintains that the view that “anarcho-capitalists aren’t really anarchists because anarchism entails anti-capitalism” is “actually backwards,” since inasmuch as they “genuinely wish to eliminate the state,” anarcho-capitalists “are anarchists, but ... aren’t really capitalists, no matter how much they want to claim they are”—because without the state, “mass ... concentration of capital is impossible,” and so consequently is “wage slavery,” without which “there’s nothing most people would recognize as ‘capitalism.’”<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, contrary to the social anarchist practice of placing the “anarcho” in “anarcho-capitalism” in scare-quotes, Morgenstern places the “capitalism” in scare-quotes instead.

Whether one regards a given thinker as a mere heretic or an actual infidel—i.e., a dissident within the fold or an outsider to the fold—generally depends on that thinker’s degree of distance or deviation from one’s own position. Since anti-capitalist individualists fall between social anarchists and anarcho-capitalists in terms of doctrinal similarity, it’s not so surprising that (a) social anarchists should be inclined to treat anti-capitalist individualists as erring comrades and anarcho-capitalists as outsiders; (b) anarcho-capitalists should likewise be inclined to treat anti-capitalist individualists as erring comrades and social anarchists as outsiders; and (c) anti-capitalist individualist anarchists should be inclined to treat both social anarchists and anarcho-capitalists merely as erring comrades, not outsiders. Given my own sympathies with the anti-capitalist individualist anarchist position, my preference for (c) is unsurprising.

But even social anarchists have not always been as hostile to free-market libertarianism as are McKay and his *Anarchist FAQ*. Murray Bookchin (1921–2006), for example, declared in 1979 that all those who “resist authority” and “defend the rights of the individual,” be they “anarcho-communists, anarcho-syndicalists, or libertarians who believe in free enterprise,” represent the “true left,” to whom he felt “much closer, ideologically,” than to “totalitarian liberals and Marxist-Leninists,” adding that what anarcho-capitalists advocate is in fact “not capitalism.”<sup>35</sup> (Bookchin’s attitude toward anarcho-capitalists was somewhat less friendly later in life; but then his attitude toward anarchists of virtually all varieties was somewhat less friendly later in life.)

Noam Chomsky’s attitude toward anarcho-capitalism lies somewhere between McKay’s and Bookchin’s. Chomsky regards “free contract” as impossible

34 A. Morgenstern, “Anarcho-‘Capitalism’ is Impossible,” *Center for a Stateless Society* (19 Sept. 2010), at <http://c4ss.org/content/4043>; cf. A. Morgenstern, “Anarchism And Capitalism—A Revisitation,” *Center for a Stateless Society* (3 Feb. 2014), <http://c4ss.org/content/24289>.

35 L.J. Newman, Interview with Murray Bookchin, *Reason* (Oct. 1979), 34–39.

under conditions of corporate power and extreme socioeconomic inequality, and so considers that anarcho-capitalism, “if ever implemented, would lead to forms of tyranny and oppression that have few counterparts in human history”; nevertheless, he notes that “[n]o one owns the term ‘anarchism,’” acknowledges that he is “in substantial agreement with people who consider themselves anarcho-capitalists on a whole range of issues,” and “admire[s] their commitment to rationality.”<sup>36</sup> (Of course an anti-capitalist individualist anarchist would argue that the socioeconomic inequality and corporate power to which Chomsky points are on Chomsky’s own showing largely the product of state intervention rather than free markets, and so should not be expected to feature in any realistic implementation of anarcho-capitalists’ ideals, whatever the anarcho-capitalists themselves expect.)<sup>37</sup> And David Graeber, who is extremely dismissive of libertarianism, and convinced that an anarchist society would have no wage labor and not much resembling a market, nevertheless notes, in somewhat Tucker-like spirit: “But who knows, maybe I’m wrong. I am less interested in working out ... the detailed architecture of what a free society would be like than in creating the conditions that would enable us to find out.”<sup>38</sup>

If the anti-capitalist individualist anarchist position is correct, then anarcho-capitalists’ tendency to assume that genuine free markets would be dominated by familiar capitalist institutions like corporate power and the wage system (a tendency, it must be noted, often shared with social anarchists) is a failing, and their tendency toward complacency about this purported result (a tendency *not* shared with social anarchists) is a failing too. But are such failings so much greater than, e.g., Proudhon’s misogyny, anti-Semitism, and homophobia, that they license shutting anarcho-capitalists, but not Proudhon, out of the anarchist movement? Are all the complications and nuances of the relevant theories to be flattened out into a wall of separation between two caricatures? And are social anarchists, rather than individualist anarchists, to claim the authority to decide what is or is not a variety of individualist anarchism—like a Muslim trying to convince Episcopalians not to recognize Mormons as true Christians?

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36 T. Lane, “On Anarchism: Noam Chomsky Interviewed,” *ZNet* (23 Dec. 1996), <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/19961223.htm>.

37 R.T. Long, “Chomsky’s Augustinian Anarchism,” *Art of the Possible* (4 Sept. 2008), <http://praxeology.net/aotp.htm#2>.

38 D. Graeber, *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2013), 193.

John Clark writes (in another context, but I find his words applicable here, whether or not Clark himself would):<sup>39</sup>

The idea that there is an “unbridgeable chasm” between two viewpoints that share certain common presuppositions and goals, and whose practices are in some ways interrelated, is a bit suspect from the outset ... Whereas nondialectical thought merely opposes one reality to another in an abstract manner, or else places them inertly beside one another, a dialectical analysis examines the ways in which various realities presuppose one another, constitute one another, challenge the identity of one another, and push one another to the limits of their development. Accordingly, one important quality of such an analysis is that it helps those with divergent viewpoints see the ways in which their positions are not mutually exclusive but can instead be mutually realized in a further development of each.<sup>40</sup>

In my view, anarcho-capitalism is best understood a subset of individualist anarchism, which in turn is a subset of both libertarianism (in the free-market sense) and anarchism.<sup>41</sup>

### Libertarian Anarchism Through the Nineteenth Century

The viability of a stateless society emerges as a theme in classical liberalism at least as early as John Locke's (1632–1704) *Second Treatise of Government* in 1689.<sup>42</sup> Defenders of absolute monarchy such as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) had maintained that a society without a state would be so chaotic that virtually any state, no matter how bad, is better than none, with the upshot that rebellions against established authority, given the danger they pose of triggering

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39 Clark's words quoted above about the essence of anarchism suggest that he might not.

40 J. Clark, *Bridging the Unbridgeable Chasm: On Bookchin's Critique of the Anarchist Tradition* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Anarchist Studies, 2008).

41 More fully, libertarianism divides into minarchism and individualist anarchism; individualist anarchism divides into anarcho-capitalism and various anti-capitalist forms of individualist anarchism; and anarchism divides into individualist anarchism and social anarchism. Thus individualist anarchism (at least in its usual market-friendly form) represents the intersection of free-market libertarianism with anarchism.

42 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* [1689], ed. P. Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).



state collapse, are to be strictly avoided.<sup>43</sup> Locke, a defender of and partial participant in just such a rebellion (the English Revolution of 1688), argued in response that a stateless society, while severely suboptimal, could be expected to exhibit enough security and order to be preferable to absolutism, making rebellion against an absolute government less risky than Hobbes had supposed. A century later, in his 1776 *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith's (1723–1790) “invisible hand” account of the emergence and maintenance of social order via market incentives without top-down direction helped to bolster the case for the viability of statelessness.<sup>44</sup> Thus Locke and Smith, major precursors to today's libertarian movement, both helped to open the door to a private-property version of anarchism, even if neither was prepared to walk through it.

We also find Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) speculating, in 1787, that a society “without government” might well be the “best” if only it were not “inconsistent with any great degree of population”;<sup>45</sup> here the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) *Second Discourse*<sup>46</sup> may also be operative, though in his attitude toward commerce Jefferson was closer to Locke and Smith than to Rousseau (as is shown by Jefferson's enthusiasm for the *laissez-faire* economist Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), recently described as the “first libertarian,”<sup>47</sup> two of whose works Jefferson had personally translated).<sup>48</sup>

In 1792 the door to market anarchism was pushed still farther open by Thomas Paine (1737–1809) in Part 2 of his *Rights of Man*; drawing on both Locke and Smith, Paine developed a more optimistic picture of the stateless society than either. Most of the “order which reigns among mankind,” Paine maintains, is “not the effect of government,” but instead arises from “the principles of society and the natural constitution of man,” maintained by a combination

43 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* [1651], ed. R. Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

44 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776], 2 vols., ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Indianapolis, In.: Liberty Fund, 1982).

45 Thomas Jefferson, Letter to James Madison (30 Jan. 1787), [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letter\\_to\\_James\\_Madison\\_-\\_January\\_30,\\_1787](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Letter_to_James_Madison_-_January_30,_1787).

46 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (Amsterdam: Marc Michel Rey, 1755).

47 J.T. Levy, “The Continuing History of Bleeding-Heart Libertarianism,” *Bleeding Heart Libertarians* (23 May 2012), <http://bleedingheartlibertarians.com/2012/05/the-continuing-history-of-bleeding-heart-libertarianism>.

48 Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy, *A Commentary and Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws*, trans. Thomas Jefferson (Philadelphia: W. Duane, 1811); Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy, *A Treatise on Political Economy*, trans. Thomas Jefferson (Washington, D.C.: Joseph Milligan, 1817).

of “reciprocal interest” and “social affections.” The “safety and prosperity of the individual and of the whole” depends far more on the “unceasing circulation of interest” than on “anything which even the best instituted government can perform,” since “society performs for itself almost everything which is ascribed to government.” Thus “government makes but a small part of civilized life,” and the “more perfect civilization is, the less occasion has it for government”; indeed, social order “existed prior to government, and would exist if the formality of government was abolished”<sup>49</sup>—in support of which claim Paine points to the successful maintenance of order in the American colonies during the Revolution, when the British governments were suspended and the home-grown ones not yet well-established.<sup>50</sup> Paine did not walk through this door either, regarding government as needed to “supply the few cases to which society and civilization are not conveniently competent”; but he certainly made the prospects of a stateless, market-based social order look attractive and practicable, and indeed exercised a major influence on William Godwin (1756–1836), often described as the first modern anarchist—even if Godwin did not share Paine’s emphasis on market incentives.<sup>51</sup> (Godwin had in fact helped get *Rights of Man* published.)

In the same era, another classical liberal, David Hume (1711–1776), was likewise making arguments from which an anarchist moral could be drawn, even if he had no interest in drawing one himself. In “Of the Original Contract,”<sup>52</sup>

49 Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* [1791–1792], ed. H. Collins (New York: Penguin, 1984), 163–165.

50 Ironically, Paine’s nemesis Edmund Burke (1729–1797) had made the same point in his 1775 speech on *Conciliation with the Colonies*: “Anarchy is found tolerable,” as Massachusetts has “subsisted in a considerable degree of health and vigor, for near a twelvemonth, without Governor, without public Council, without Judges, without executive Magistrates.” Edmund Burke, *Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq., on Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies* (London: J. Dodsley, 1775), 36. Burke himself had written a youthful defense of anarchism, though purportedly with satirical intent: *A Vindication of Natural Society: Or, a View of the Miseries and Evils Arising to Mankind from Every Species of Artificial Society* (London: M. Cooper, 1756). On Burke’s probable motivations in writing the *Vindication*, see I. Kramnick, *The Rage of Edmund Burke: Portrait of an Ambivalent Conservative* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

51 William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, 2 vols. (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1793). Godwin’s anarchism is difficult to categorize; in his moral condemnation of private property he sounds like an anarcho-communist, while in his insistence that private property not be forcibly interfered with he sounds like an individualist.

52 David Hume, “Of the Original Contract” [1758], in *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, ed. E.F. Miller (Indianapolis, In.: Liberty Fund, 1987), 465–487.

Hume argues that no actual government has ever rested on a social contract. His aim is to disparage social-contract theory, but his conclusions could instead have the result of casting doubt on the legitimacy of all existing governments. Likewise, in “Of the First Principles of Government,”<sup>53</sup> Hume revives (perhaps unknowingly) the argument of Renaissance radical Étienne de la Boétie (1530–1563)<sup>54</sup> that, inasmuch as the rulers in any society are vastly outnumbered by those they rule, all political power ultimately rests on popular acquiescence rather than force. Unlike La Boétie, Hume is seeking to show the non-necessity of revolution rather than its ease; but his arguments could easily be turned (as they in fact were by Godwin, who explicitly cites Hume on this point)<sup>55</sup> to establish that since popular opinion rather than governmental force is what maintains social order, the institution of government is dispensable.

It is in the 19th century that the radicalization of classical liberal ideas in a market anarchist direction comes into its own. Jean-Baptiste Say (1767–1832), France’s leading *laissez-faire* economist, speculated that market mechanisms might one day replace the state entirely, though he offered few details.<sup>56</sup> Three of Say’s adherents—Charles Comte (1782–1837), Charles Dunoyer (1786–1862), and Augustin Thierry (1795–1856), editors of the radical liberal journal *Le Censeur* (1814–1815) and its successor *Le Censeur Européen* (1817–1820)<sup>57</sup>—led the libertarian wing of the so-called “industrialist” movement, which looked forward to the establishment of a society based on what they called *industrial* relations, i.e. production and trade, rather than on parasitism and force.<sup>58</sup> The *Censeur* group developed a theory of class struggle according to

53 David Hume, “Of the First Principles of Government” [1758], in *Essays Moral, Political, Literary*, 32–36.

54 Étienne de la Boétie, *Le Discours de la servitude volontaire ou Le Contr’un* [1574], ed. C. Ovtcharenko (Chicoutimi, Qué: Bibliothèque Paul-Émile-Boulet, 2009).

55 Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, I, 98.

56 A. Gabriel, “Was Jean-Baptiste Say a Market Anarchist?” *Mises Daily* (28 Mar. 2007), <http://mises.org/library/was-jean-baptiste-say-market-anarchist>.

57 The essential study of the *Censeur* group is David M. Hart, “Class Analysis, Slavery and the Industrialist Theory of History in French Liberal Thought, 1814–1830: The Radical Liberalism of Charles Comte and Charles Dunoyer” (Ph.D. dissertation, King’s College Cambridge, 1994).

58 The movement’s more authoritarian wing was led by Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) and Auguste Comte (1798–1857)—the latter no relation to Charles. Both wings viewed existing states as systems of unjust expropriation of an industrial class (a group including both capitalists and workers) for the benefit of a parasitic class. But despite initial collaboration, the groups soon diverged, as the authoritarian wing favored replacing the parasitic rulership with representatives of the industrial class, while for the *Censeur* side

which differential access to state power, rather than differential access to the means of production, is the key to class rule, so that state power itself is what must primarily be opposed if class rule is to be overcome. (Karl Marx points to Thierry's work in particular as a precursor of his own class theory.)<sup>59</sup> While these authors never called explicitly for the abolition of the state apparatus, their language skirted the edges of such a position; Thierry, for example, looked forward to the day when "[f]ederations will replace states" and the "tendency toward government ... will cede to the free community,"<sup>60</sup> and Dunoyer referred to the nation-states of his day as "monstrous aggregations ... formed and made necessary by the spirit of domination," prophesying that the "spirit of industry will dissolve them" and thereby "municipalize the world," as "centers of actions ... multiply" until the entire human race constitutes "a single people ... bound together without confusion and without violence by ... the most peaceful and the most profitable of relationships."<sup>61</sup>

The first thinker to use "anarchist" as a label for his own view rather than a term of abuse, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon called for voluntary associations of workers to replace both capitalist firms and the state, and envisioned a mutual bank whereby workers could provide credit to one another at cost rather than relying on privileged banks. While he crossed dialectical swords with the *Censeur* group, his possible debt to them may be seen in his call for the "dissolution of government in the economic organism,"<sup>62</sup> echoing their call for governmental relations to yield to industrial ones.

Does Proudhon count as an individualist anarchist? An inspiration to social anarchist and individualists alike, Proudhon fits comfortably in neither category.<sup>63</sup> Unlike most social anarchists, Proudhon defends market

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the problem was not the personnel in power but the power hierarchy itself, and a truly "industrial" social order demanded a flatter, more decentralized, and more voluntaristic form of social organization.

59 Karl Marx, Letter to Joseph Weydemeyer (5 March 1852) and Letter to Friedrich Engels (27 July 1854), in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works: 1852–1855*, vol. 39 (New York: International Publishers, 1983), 58, 472.

60 Augustin Thierry, Review of Destutt de Tracy, *Commentaire sur l'Esprit des lois de Montesquieu; suivi d'Observations inédites de Condorcet, sur le vingt-neuvième livre du même ouvrage* (Liège: J.F. Desoer, 1817), in *Censeur Européen* VII (27 Mar. 1818): 191–260. Translation mine.

61 Charles-Barthélemy Dunoyer, *L'Industrie et la Morale considérées dans leurs rapports avec la liberté* (Paris: Sautlet, 1825), 366–367. Translation mine.

62 Proudhon, *Idée générale de la révolution*, 277.

63 R.T. Long, "Anarchism," in *Routledge Companion to Social and Political Philosophy*, eds. F. D'Agostino and G. Gaus (London: Routledge, 2012), 220. By far the best English-language

competition. To be sure, he opposes private property; but Proudhon distinguishes two forms of private ownership, a more absolutist form that he opposed (“property”) and a less absolutist form that he defended (“possession”);<sup>64</sup> hence in labeling *property* theft, he is not calling all *private ownership* theft. On the other hand, at least in Proudhon’s early writings possession is even less absolutist than the occupancy-and-use holdings championed by self-described Proudhonians like Tucker (e.g., being subject to redistribution with changes in population). But while initially defending possession as a dialectical synthesis of the mutually opposed concepts of *property* and *communism*, Proudhon in later years becomes convinced that opposites must be balanced against one another rather than synthesized, and so makes room in his theory for “property” in the formerly pejorative sense as a counterweight to the organized power of society.<sup>65</sup>

More directly in the line of intellectual descent from Say and the *Censeur* group was the Belgian-born economist Gustave de Molinari (1819–1912).<sup>66</sup> Molinari is the first thinker to describe, in 1849, how private security companies competing on a free market could replace the security functions of the state, rendering a territorial-monopoly state unnecessary<sup>67</sup>—a model later developed in more detail by both anarcho-capitalists and anti-capitalist individualists. Molinari conceived the ability on the part of consumers to switch security providers without relocating geographically as a more effective check on the growth of power than the ballot under a democratic state. Though declining to call himself an anarchist, Molinari did describe the process by which

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collection of Proudhon’s writings is I. McKay, ed., *Property is Theft! A Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Reader* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2011). The volume does tend, however, to stress those aspects of Proudhon’s thought that are most congenial to social anarchists rather than individualist anarchists. See S.P. Wilbur, Review of Iain McKay, ed., *Property Is Theft!*, in *Libertarian Labyrinth* (2014), <http://library.libertarian-labyrinth.org/items/show/3154>.

64 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Qu’est-ce que la propriété? ou Recherche sur le principe du Droit et du Gouvernement* (Paris: J.-F. Brocard, 1840); Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère*, 2 vols. (Paris: Guillaumin, 1846).

65 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Théorie de la Propriété* (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1866).

66 The two chief studies of Molinari’s thought are D.M. Hart, “Gustave de Molinari and the Anti-Étatiste Liberal Tradition” (B.A. thesis, Macquarie University, 1979) and G. Minart, *Gustave de Molinari (1819–1912): Pour un gouvernement à bon marché dans un milieu libre* (Paris: Institut Charles Coquelin, 2012).

67 Gustave de Molinari, “De la production de la sécurité,” *Journal des Economistes* (Feb. 1849): 277–290; Gustave de Molinari, *Les Soirées de la Rue Saint-Lazare: Entretiens sur les lois économiques et défense de la propriété* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1849).

government could be replaced by market mechanisms as the “diffusion of the state within society,”<sup>68</sup> a clear echo of Proudhon. While not an opponent of the wage system, Molinari did regard workers as subject to an unfair disadvantage in bargaining power *vis-à-vis* capitalists, and advocated a system of voluntary labor-exchanges to redress the imbalance by fostering greater mobility of labor.<sup>69</sup>

One thinker possibly influenced by Molinari is his fellow Belgian Paul-Émile de Puydt (1810–1891), who coined the term “panarchy” for his proposed system of competing political regimes within a single territory.<sup>70</sup> Another is Anselme Bellegarrigue (1839–c. 1869),<sup>71</sup> whose ideas resemble an amalgamation of Proudhon, Molinari, and Stirner, and whose 1850 publication *Anarchy: A Journal of Order* appears to be the first anarchist periodical to feature the word in its title.<sup>72</sup> Bellegarrigue was more hostile to the wage system than was Molinari, but shared his enthusiasm for the market provision of security, though he was vaguer about the details.

On the other side of the Channel, one of the most important pioneers of anti-capitalist individualist anarchism is Thomas Hodgskin,<sup>73</sup> who was already calling for the replacement of governments by private enterprise as early as 1820.<sup>74</sup> Accepting Locke’s theory of natural property rights, Hodgskin argued that the property of the landed and capitalist classes originated not in the legitimate Lockean methods of homesteading and voluntary trade, but in governmental grants of privilege. Hodgskin’s theory of class (which, like that of

68 Gustave de Molinari, *L'évolution politique et la révolution* (Paris: C. Reinwald, 1884), 394.

69 Gustave de Molinari, *Les bourses du travail* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1893).

70 Paul Émile de Puydt, “Panarchie,” *Revue Trimestrielle* 27 (Jul. 1860): 222–245. De Puydt’s version of panarchy maintained a role for a monopoly state as a legal framework within which the competing regimes would operate, but subsequent thinkers who have built on de Puydt’s ideas have dispensed with this feature; see Max Nettlau, “Panarchie: Eine verschollene Idee von 1860,” *Der Sozialist* (15 Mar. 1909); Gian Piero de Bellis, “On Panarchy: A Brief Review and a Personal View” (2009), <http://www.panarchy.org/debellis/onpanarchy.html>.

71 M. Perradeau, *Anselme Bellegarrigue: Le premier des libertaires* (Paris: Libertaires Editions, 2012).

72 Anselme Bellegarrigue, *L'Anarchie: journal de l'ordre* (Apr.–May 1850); cf. Anselme Bellegarrigue, *Au fait, au fait!! Interprétation de l'idée démocratique* (Paris: Garnier, 1848).

73 The best study of Hodgskin is D. Stack, *Nature and Artifice: The Life and Thought of Thomas Hodgskin, 1787–1869* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1997), though the earlier study by E. Halévy, *Thomas Hodgskin*, trans. A.J. Taylor (London: Ernest Benn, 1956) remains useful.

74 Thomas Hodgskin, *Travels in the North of Germany: Describing the Present State of the Social and Political Institutions in That Country, Particularly in the Kingdom of Hanover*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820).

the *Censeur* group, influenced Marx without being adopted by him) assigned responsibility for class rule not simply, as for Marx, to differential access to the means of production, nor yet simply, as for the *Censeur* group, to differential access to state power, but rather to differential access to the means of production *grounded in* differential access to state power. Abolish the state, let economic *laissez-faire* reign, and the power of landlords and capitalists would wither away.<sup>75</sup> Since distribution of property in violation of Lockean property rights is the chief cause of crime, a post-governmental society would have little need of police services.<sup>76</sup>

Hodgskin's protégé Herbert Spencer contributed to the pro-market, anti-state tradition with his 1850 book *Social Statics*,<sup>77</sup> a work that has influenced both anarcho-capitalists and anti-capitalist individualists, without being precisely to the taste of either. Defending a "law of equal freedom" (explicitly extended to women, children, and non-whites) as necessary for the full development of each individual's faculties, Spencer maintained that government belongs to "a particular phase of human development," and will likely be succeeded by "one in which it shall have become extinct."<sup>78</sup> He argued further that inasmuch as only voluntary associations are legitimate, any individual has a right to withdraw all connection with and support for the state.<sup>79</sup> Unlike his contemporary Molinari, however, Spencer did not envision the possibility of the dissident's transferring his affiliation to a rival security agency; in general, Spencer expected order in a stateless society to be maintained not by the sorts of economic incentives Molinari was appealing to, but instead to the general tendency of human nature to evolve toward a condition of greater and greater

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75 Thomas Hodgskin, *Labour Defended Against the Claims of Capital; or the Unproductiveness of Capital Proved with Reference to the Present Combinations Amongst Journeymen, by a Labourer* (London: B. Steil, 1825); Thomas Hodgskin, *Popular Political Economy: Four Lectures Delivered at the London Mechanics' Institution* (London: Tait, 1827); Thomas Hodgskin, *The Natural and Artificial Rights of Property Contrasted* (London: B. Steil, 1832). Thomas Hodgskin, "Peace, Law, and Order": *A Lecture Delivered in the Hall of the National Association* (London: Hetherington, 1842).

76 Thomas Hodgskin, *What Shall We Do With Our Criminals? Don't Create Them: A Lecture Delivered at St. Martin's Hall* (London: Groombridge, 1857); Thomas Hodgskin, *Our Chief Crime: Cause and Cure: Second Lecture on What Shall We Do With Our Criminals* (London: Groombridge, 1857).

77 Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics: Or, the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified, and the First of Them Developed* (London: John Chapman, 1851). While 1851 is the stated publication date, the book actually appeared in late 1850.

78 *Ibid.*, 13.

79 *Ibid.*, 206.

altruism. In any case, the anarchist dimension of Spencer's thought in *Social Statics* becomes considerably moderated in his subsequent work, and later editions even deleted the chapter on "The Right to Ignore the State."

It's difficult to say to what extent Spencer counts as a "capitalist" thinker. He rejected private property in land,<sup>80</sup> and insisted on the continuity and mutual dependence between governmental and private forms of oppression. On the other hand, most of his views on property rights (not counting land) are indistinguishable from those of anarcho-capitalists. Sympathetic and unsympathetic attitudes toward the poor coexist cheek by jowl throughout his work; and while Spencer never held the "Social Darwinist" view often attributed to him, that the weaker and less fit should be allowed to die off to improve the species, the unsympathetic attitudes tend to predominate in his later work, to the point that Benjamin Tucker accused him of having "become a champion of the capitalistic class."<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, even toward the end of his life Spencer continued to regard the wage system as a vestige of slavery, and to look forward to its replacement by workers' cooperatives.<sup>82</sup> While Spencer may have retreated from the antistatist implications of his principles, those implications were developed further by such Spencerians as Auberon Herbert and Wordsworth Donisthorpe, whose work Tucker simultaneously hailed as anarchistic and criticised (sometimes) as too capitalistic.

Across the Atlantic, Josiah Warren (1798–1874), an individualist defector from one of Robert Owen's collectivistic experimental communities, was establishing his own individualist communities (Utopia, Ohio and Modern Times, New York) with the help of his chief disciple, Stephen Pearl Andrews (1812–1886);<sup>83</sup> Warren's 1833 *Peaceful Revolutionist* is often described as the first anarchist periodical. Warren and Andrews championed the labor theory of

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80 In a mostly glowing review, the only major objection raised by the so-called "socialist" Hodgskin against the so-called "capitalist" Spencer was that Spencer showed insufficient respect for private property in land! See Thomas Hodgskin, Review of Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, in *The Economist* 9, no. 389 (8 Feb. 1851): 149–151.

81 Benjamin R. Tucker, "The Sin of Herbert Spencer," *Liberty* 2, no. 16 (17 May 1884): 170–171.

82 Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. 3 (New York: D. Appleton, 1899), 551–552, 573.

83 C. Sartwell, ed., *The Practical Anarchist: Writings of Josiah Warren* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Stephen Pearl Andrews, *The Science of Society, No. 1: The True Constitution of Government in the Sovereignty of the Individual As the Final Development of Protestantism, Democracy and Socialism* (New York: William J. Baner, 1851); Stephen Pearl Andrews, *The Science of Society, No. 2: Cost the Limit of Price: A Scientific Measure of Honesty in Trade As One of the Fundamental Principles in the Solution of the Social Problem* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1852); M.B. Stern, *The Pantarch: A Biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1968).



value as a moral principle (while proposing to secure adherence to this rule by education and example rather than by force of law), and upheld the principles of “equitable commerce” and “the sovereignty of the individual, to be exercised at his own cost.” Both thinkers (but Andrews in particular) also championed racial and gender equality.

Individualist anarchists who followed in their footsteps, developing a fusion of antistatism, abolitionism, feminism, free love, antimilitarism, and labor empowerment, included William Batchelder Greene (1819–1878); Ezra H. Heywood (1829–1893)<sup>84</sup> and his wife Angela (1840–1935); Moses Harman (1830–1910) and his daughter Lillian (1869–1929); Dyer D. Lum (1839–1893); Francis Dashwood Tandy (1867–1913); Clara Dixon Davidson (1851–1916); Sarah E. Holmes (1847–1929); Joseph Labadie (1850–1933);<sup>85</sup> Gertrude B. Kelly (1862–1934); and of course the aforementioned Spooner, Tucker, and de Cleyre. Most of these thinkers were associated with Tucker’s journal *Liberty* (1881–1908);<sup>86</sup> some of them incorporated ideas from European thinkers like Proudhon, Stirner, and Spencer (with Spencer’s “law of equal freedom” and his theory of historical progress from “militant” to “industrial” society being especially popular), while others did not. These thinkers were, and often called themselves, “socialists,” in the sense of calling for worker control of industry; several of them (Warren, Andrews, Greene, and by one account Spooner) were even members of the American branch of the First International. But their conception of what it meant to implement socialism involved not the suppression, but rather the emancipation, of markets and private property. By contrast with Warren and Andrews, later thinkers like Tucker regarded the labor theory of value as a predictive rather than a normative principle; in a free and competitive market, they held, cost would tend to determine price, and so urging sellers to charge no more than cost would be superfluous. The 19th-century American individualists are covered in more detail elsewhere in this volume,<sup>87</sup> so I shall pass onward to the following century.

84 M. Blatt, *Free Love and Anarchism: The Biography of Ezra Heywood* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

85 C. Anderson, *All-American Anarchist: Joseph A. Labadie and the Labor Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

86 For the views of the various writers associated with *Liberty*, see F.H. Brooks, ed., *The Individualist Anarchists: An Anthology of Liberty, 1881–1908* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1994), and W. McElroy, *The Debates of Liberty: An Overview of Individualist Anarchism, 1881–1908* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002). For the American individualist anarchist movement more broadly, see J. Martin, *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism, 1827–1908* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Ralph Myles, 1970).

87 See Kevin Carson’s chapter on “Market Anarchism” in this volume.

### Libertarian Anarchism in the 20th Century

Contemporary free-market libertarianism grew out of the revival of classical liberalism in the early to mid-20th century,<sup>88</sup> by such figures as Ludwig von Mises (1881–1973), Isabel Paterson (1866–1961), Friedrich A. Hayek (1889–1992), Ayn Rand (1905–1982), and Milton Friedman (1912–2006)—thinkers who for the most part challenged the legitimacy of neither monopoly capital nor the state.<sup>89</sup> But just as with Locke, Smith, and Paine, these founders of modern libertarianism opened doors through which others would walk. The stress placed by economists like Mises, Hayek, and Friedman on the ability of self-ordering markets to produce and maintain social coordination without central direction helped to make statelessness seem viable, while Rand's insistence on a moral principle banning the initiation of force made the state's claim to a coercive territorial monopoly look dubious. From the 1960s onward, growing numbers of libertarians who had cut their teeth on the likes of Mises and Rand—writers such as Morris and Linda Tannehill,<sup>90</sup> Roy A. Childs,<sup>91</sup> David Friedman (Milton Friedman's more radical son),<sup>92</sup> Randy Barnett,<sup>93</sup> and most prominently Mises's protégé Murray N. Rothbard<sup>94</sup>—began to revive and develop the idea of replacing the state with competing protection agencies.

Firms that were inefficient, or abused power, or solved inter-firm disputes by the costly method of warfare rather than the cheaper method of arbitration, would find themselves losing customers to more civilized competitors; and customer demand for intrusive or bigoted policies would decline once confronted with the need to pay the full cost of such policies rather than

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88 For the twentieth-century rise and development of free-market libertarianism in the United States, see B. Doherty, *Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009).

89 Those who did continue to uphold the anti-state, anti-monopoly position were mainly followers of Henry George, such as Albert Jay Nock (1870–1945) and Frank Chodorov (1887–1966).

90 M. Tannehill and L. Tannehill, *The Market for Liberty* (Washington D.C.: Libertarian Review Foundation, 1970).

91 R.A. Childs, "An Open Letter to Ayn Rand: Objectivism and the State," *Rational Individualist* 1, no. 10 (Aug. 1969): 4–12. This was a reply to Ayn Rand, "The Nature of Government," in *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 125–134.

92 Friedman, *Machinery of Freedom*, op. cit.

93 R.E. Barnett, *The Structure of Liberty: Justice and the Rule of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

94 M.N. Rothbard, *For a New Liberty* (New York: Macmillan, 1973); Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty*, op. cit.

socializing them through the ballot box. Not all of these writers were familiar with the earlier history of such ideas; but Rothbard and his associates were, and played an important role in publicizing and reviving interest in thinkers like Molinari, Spooner, and Tucker. They also pointed to historical examples of non-state legal systems from medieval Iceland to the American frontier as demonstrating the efficacy of competitive security provision.<sup>95</sup>

In the 1960s, Rothbard and several of his allies, including Leonard Liggio and former Goldwater speechwriter Karl Hess,<sup>96</sup> welcomed the emerging New Left as a positive liberatory force,<sup>97</sup> and a welcome alternative both to the militarism of mainstream liberalism and conservatism, and the bureaucratic authoritarianism of the Old Left. The Rothbardians drew a free-market moral from the works of Gabriel Kolko and other New Left revisionist historians who debunked the traditional reading of the Progressive movement and its New Deal successor as an attack on big business on behalf of the downtrodden<sup>98</sup> (Kolko argued that the corporate elite were the chief beneficiaries of, and often the chief lobbyists for, supposedly anti-business legislation); Rothbardians also sought alliances with such groups as the Students for a Democratic Society and the Black Panthers. But the effective collapse of the New Left soon sent Rothbard and many (not all) of his associates rebounding in a severely rightward direction—though Samuel E. Konkin III and his “Movement of the Libertarian Left,” with its hostility to the wage system, and its anti-electoral,

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95 The standard literature on historical examples cited by free-market anarchists is surveyed in T.W. Bell, “Polycentric Law,” *Humane Studies Review* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1991/1992): 1–10. Contributions since Bell’s bibliographic essay was published include T.L. Anderson and P.J. Hill, *The Not So Wild, Wild West: Property Rights on the Frontier* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004); P.T. Leeson, *Anarchy Unbound: Why Self-Governance Works Better Than You Think* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and E.P. Stringham, *Private Governance: Creating Order in Economic and Social Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

96 Hess has also been credited with originating the Occupy movement’s language of the 99% against the 1%. See M. Tkacik, “The Radical Right-Wing Roots of Occupy Wall Street,” *Reuters Blog* (20 Sept. 20, 2012), <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2012/09/20/the-radical-right-wing-roots-of-occupy-wall-street>.

97 See, e.g., the Rothbard-edited journals *Left and Right* (1965–1968) and, at least in its early years, *Libertarian Forum* (1969–1984). Especially relevant is M.N. Rothbard, “Liberty and the New Left,” *Left and Right* 1, no. 2 (Aug. 1965): 35–67.

98 See, e.g., R.A. Childs, “Big Business and the Rise of American Statism,” *Reason* (Feb. 1971): 9–12; R.A. Childs, “Big Business and the Rise of American Statism,” *Reason* (Mar. 1971): 12–18; cf. John Payne, “Rothbard’s Time on the Left,” *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 19, no. 1 (2005): 7–24.

“agorist” strategy of building networks of black-market enterprises to replace the state, kept alive an aspect of the period of left/libertarian rapprochement.<sup>99</sup>

In the 1970s, the debate between minarchist and anarchist versions of libertarianism gained academic prominence with the publication of Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*.<sup>100</sup> Nozick, a former member of Rothbard's circle, devoted the opening chapters of his book to a critique of Rothbard-style anarchism (though many readers, unfamiliar with the libertarian tradition in which Nozick was working, took the system of competing protection agencies to be Nozick's invention). Nozick argued that free-market anarchism *would* develop into a state, and *could* do so permissibly. On behalf of the predictive claim, Nozick suggested that agencies would solve their disputes either by violent conflict or by arbitration; violent conflict would lead either to more powerful agencies conquering weaker ones, or (if agencies were equally matched) by their dividing the territory between them, and thus, in either case, to one or more states—while arbitration would lead over time to a single legal system uniting all the agencies, and thus again to a state. On behalf of the permissibility claim, Nozick maintained that a dominant protection agency would be within its rights to ban competitors in order to protect its own customers from their possibly risky procedures, so long as it compensated its competitors' erstwhile customers by extending its protection to them. Free-market anarchists disputed both the predictive claim (denying, for example, that a system of arbitration contracts among protection agencies constitutes a state, so long as free entry is permitted) and the normative one (insisting that the mere possibility of risky procedures is insufficient grounds to license prohibiting competitors).<sup>101</sup> The debate has survived its original participants, and has more recently turned on the question of whether a network of protection agencies would be in a position to form a stable cartel to exclude new entrants.<sup>102</sup>

99 Konkin *New Libertarian Manifest*, op. cit.; S.E. Konkin, *An Agorist Primer* (Huntington Beach, Calif.: KoPubCo, 2008).

100 R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

101 R.A. Childs, Jr., “The Invisible Hand Strikes Back,” *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1977): 22–33; M.N. Rothbard, “Robert Nozick and the Immaculate Conception of the State,” *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1, no. 1 (1977): 45–47.

102 T. Cowen, “Law as a Public Good: The Economics of Anarchy,” *Economics and Philosophy* 8 (1992): 249–267; B. Caplan and E.P. Stringham, “Networks, Law, and the Paradox of Cooperation,” *Review of Austrian Economics* 16, no. 4 (2003): 309–326. On the anarchist/minarchist debate more broadly, see E.P. Stringham, ed., *Anarchy and the Law: The Political Economy of Choice* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2011), and R.T. Long and T.R. Machan, eds., *Anarchism/Minarchism: Is a Government Part of a Free Country?*

### Libertarian Anarchism Today: The Anti-Capitalist Revival

The past two decades have seen a revival of the anti-capitalist version of free-market anarchism, primarily via figures associated with the Center for a Stateless Society and the Alliance of the Libertarian Left—including Gary Chartier, Charles W. Johnson, Sheldon Richman, and most influentially of all, Kevin Carson.<sup>103</sup> Within the libertarian movement these thinkers are usually called “left-libertarians”—one of many meanings of that phrase.<sup>104</sup> Carson’s approach, which he labels “free-market anti-capitalism,” represents in large part an updating of Tucker’s (though without Tucker’s egoistic ethical orientation); in particular, Carson defends the labor theory of value (albeit in a subjectivized version) and a use-and-occupancy approach to land ownership, though his overall analysis has been enormously influential even on contemporary anti-capitalist individualists who disagree with him on the labor theory and on land, but agree in regarding the concentration of the means of production in the hands of the capitalist class as a product of government intervention in the market, and a state of affairs that would be dissolved by free competition.

Much of Carson’s work focuses on the extent to which the large, hierarchical firms that dominate the contemporary economic scene are the product of state intervention. Carson notes that while economies of scale reward

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(Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2012). The most prominent recent academic defense of the free-market anarchist position is M. Huemer, *The Problem of Political Authority: An Examination of the Right to Coerce and the Duty to Obey* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

103 K.A. Carson, *Studies in Mutualist Political Economy* (Charleston, S.C.: BookSurge, 2007); K.A. Carson, *Organization Theory: A Libertarian Perspective* (Charleston, S.C.: BookSurge, 2008); K.A. Carson, *The Homebrew Industrial Revolution: A Low-Overhead Manifesto* (Charleston, S.C.: BookSurge, 2010). Other major works of the revival include G. Chartier, *Anarchy and Legal Order: Law and Politics for a Stateless Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and G. Chartier and C.W. Johnson, eds., *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty* (London: Minor Compositions, 2011).

104 The term “left-libertarian” is commonly used in at least three senses: a) to distinguish social anarchism from free-market libertarianism; b) to distinguish anticapitalist (and/or otherwise left-wing) versions of free-market libertarianism from capitalist (and/or otherwise right-wing) ones; and c) to identify a position (not necessarily anarchist) that combines self-ownership with some kind of common ownership of resources. Sense (c) emerged in academic circles in the 1990s, and is associated with thinkers such as Peter Vallentyne, Hillel Steiner, and Michael Otsuka; senses (a) and (b) are older. Sense (b) is the operative one here.

increased firm size up to a certain point, the problems of information flow in large, hierarchical organizations isolated from price feedback show that diseconomies of scale eventually overtake economies of scale; otherwise a single firm centrally planning the entire economy would be the zenith of efficiency. In many cases, however, government intervention enables firms to grow past the point of overtake by externalizing the costs of increased scale while privatizing the profits. For example, when larger scale makes a firm more productive, it ordinarily faces higher distribution costs, since the area over which it needs to sell its products has widened; but transportation subsidies (originally railways, later highways), to which these firms do not pay a share in taxes proportionate to their use, enable them to reap the benefits of larger scale while facing only the costs associated with a smaller scale. Without such interventions, firms would be smaller, flatter, and more numerous, and both workers' cooperatives and individual proprietorships would become viable alternatives to traditional wage labor.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, the "abolition of patents and trademarks" would mean an "end to all restrictions on the production and sale of competing versions of medications under patent, often for as little as 5% of the price," as well as an "end to all legal barriers that prevent Nike's contractors in Asia from immediately producing identical knockoff sneakers and marketing them to the local population at a tiny fraction of the price."<sup>106</sup>

While staunchly in the anticapitalist individualist tradition of anarchism, Carson draws freely, though not uncritically, on anarcho-capitalist and social anarchist influences as well. Carson has coined and popularized the phrase "vulgar libertarianism" to refer to the tendency within the mainstream libertarian movement to treat the virtues of free markets as justifying the evils of existing capitalism. (The analogous term "vulgar liberalism" is applied to the tendency on the left to treat the evils of existing capitalism as grounds for condemning free markets.) Carson also embraces such "leftist" concerns as intersectional feminism and environmental sustainability—concerns often alien to the mainstream libertarian movement.

Yet while widely known as a severe critic of contemporary libertarianism, Carson also considers himself part of it: "as an individualist in the tradition of Tucker," he writes, "I embrace *both* the free market libertarian and libertarian socialist camps."<sup>107</sup> Most other figures in the free-market anti-capitalist revival have expressed similar attitudes. The reception of this revival among

<sup>105</sup> Carson, *Organization Theory*, chapters 1–7.

<sup>106</sup> K.A. Carson, "What Is Left-Libertarianism?" *Center for a Stateless Society* (15 Jun. 2014), <http://c4ss.org/content/28216>.

<sup>107</sup> Carson, *Organization Theory*, 1.

mainstream libertarians has been mixed. In a 2006 symposium issue of the *Journal of Libertarian Studies* devoted to Carson's first book, reactions ranged from one writer's praise for Carson's "impressive work" and "strong case that the typical libertarian defense of the modern employer/employee relationship may be quite naïve" owing to "ignorance of the historical development of capitalism"<sup>108</sup> to another writer's angry dismissal of Carson's "ignorant Marxist diatribes against capitalism."<sup>109</sup> Whatever the future holds, the revival of free-market anti-capitalism is likely to play an important role in relations between the libertarian and anarchist movements.

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108 R.P. Murphy, "The Labor Theory of Value: A Critique of Carson's *Studies in Mutualist Political Economy*," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 20, no. 1 (2006): 17–33.

109 G. Reisman, "Freedom Is Slavery: Laissez-Faire Capitalism Is Government Intervention: A Critique of Carson's *Studies in Mutualist Political Economy*," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 20, no. 1 (2006): 84.

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## Anarchism, Poststructuralism, and Contemporary European Philosophy

*Todd May*

### Introduction

There are many entries in this volume that do not require a definition of the field at the outset. Existentialism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics, for instance, are fields with fairly well delimited borders. Even feminism, although a wide and diverse area, can be delimited in a more or less uncontroversial way. Unfortunately, that is not the case with the current entry. In discussing the relationship, more theoretical than historical, between anarchism and poststructuralism, the first question that must be faced is: what is poststructuralism? The answer to that question is not obvious and is not agreed upon.

I cannot resolve that question here, except through declaration or fiat. In order to approach it in a more productive way, then, let me distinguish three terms: postmodernism, deconstruction, and poststructuralism. Postmodernism is probably the most commonly used, and least well delineated term. First introduced by Charles Jencks in regard to architecture,<sup>1</sup> it has been used to refer to a movement in painting, characterized for instance by the work of David Salle, that sees painting as a largely exhausted discipline that relies on quotation in order to sustain itself. It has been applied to literature that is constructed in a fragmented way, such as David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. It has been invoked in philosophy and social theory by Jean-François Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*, where he refers to it as alternately as the chronological period characterized by "the end of grand narratives" and (in the appendix) as any form of modernism "in its nascent state."<sup>2</sup> I have even seen advertisements for postmodern clothing. Although we will have an opportunity to see one of Lyotard's definitions at work in our discussion of poststructuralism, nothing else associated with this term will be of interest to us here.

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<sup>1</sup> C. Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* [1979], trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 79.

Deconstruction is another matter altogether. In my 1994 book *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*,<sup>3</sup> I did not include a discussion of Derrida's work, since it is theoretically quite different from that of the group of poststructuralists (Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Lyotard) that I treated there. However, Derrida is often classed with these other poststructuralists, a classification that, taken chronologically, would not be amiss. Moreover, in a survey like the current one, and especially since Jacques Derrida's later, more political work has received much discussion, it is worth including here. However, the differences between deconstruction and the poststructuralism characteristic of Foucault, Deleuze, and Lyotard should be kept in mind. For the latter, the reaction against the structuralism of the previous generation is rooted not so much in its participation in what is thought to be the general character of Western metaphysics, as deconstruction would have it. Rather, it is that the previous generation of structuralists, by reducing the multiplicity of the world and human practices to single explainers—kinship relationships for Claude Levi-Strauss, the structure of the unconscious for Jacques Lacan, the role of the economy (in the last instance) for Louis Althusser—threatens both to betray a proper understanding of our world and to miss or marginalize forms of resistance that have their proper integrity. Because of this, the poststructuralism of thinkers like Foucault, Deleuze, and Lyotard is more immediately and self-consciously political than is deconstruction.

This is not to deny that there are important differences among those three thinkers themselves. For instance, while Foucault operates in a way that abjures ontological commitment, Deleuze embraces a deeply ontological approach in his writings. Lyotard, for his part, develops in some of his later writings an orientation that intersects in some ways with that of Foucault and in others with that of Deleuze. But their common embrace of multiplicity rather than identity, in contrast to Derrida's focus on difference, trace, supplementarity, etc., places them in a broad framework that should be distinguished from deconstruction.

This essay, then, will begin with the poststructuralism of each of the three thinkers I treated twenty years ago, and then move toward a treatment of Derrida's relation to anarchism. Before closing, however, it would be worth pausing over what might be called an example of "post-poststructuralist" thought—that of Jacques Rancière—since he is not only an inheritor especially of Foucault's views, but is also the most forthright of this theoretical strain to embrace the term and some of the ideas of anarchism. In fact, it might be said that Rancière articulates some of the more anarchist normative

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3 T. May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).



commitments implicit in the work of Foucault, and by extension Deleuze and Lyotard.

Before turning to this task, however, we should linger over the term *anarchism*. After all, it is not as though that term is entirely uncontested, even if it is less so than poststructuralism. The way we define anarchism will have bearing on the relations that are drawn between the two.

In my book on poststructuralist anarchism, I drew a distinction between what I termed strategic and tactical political philosophies. A strategic political philosophy sees political and social relations as anchored in a particular Archimedean point. For instance, traditional Marxism views economic relations as the hinge around which society pivots. (Whether Marx himself viewed things this way is another matter.) Change the economic relationships, and you change the structure of society. A tactical political philosophy, by contrast, resists the reductionism of strategic philosophies. It denies that there is a centerpiece or hinge or Archimedean point to political and social relationships. There are many different and irreducible relations of power—economic, political, gendered, racial, etc.—that intersect in complex ways without any one of them being the source from which the others emerge or having necessary sway over the others. This is not to deny that they interact with one another in complex ways, but only that there is a single source for all of them.

In my reading, anarchism is a tactical rather than a strategic political philosophy. What might be taken to be a central concept of anarchism—domination—has a different structure from that of exploitation in Marxism. Exploitation refers to the extraction of surplus value from the members of the working class. It is a purely economic concept. Domination, we might say, is more plastic. It refers to hierarchical relationships of many kinds. Exploitation involves domination, but so does patriarchy, and so does racism. To be sure, these forms of domination intersect in different ways. However, they are not reducible to any one of them, nor too another, “deeper” form of domination. Each must be analyzed in its specificity, and their interactions, in turn, must be analyzed in *their* specificity if we are to understand the character of domination in a particular society. As a result of this, we cannot say in advance how resistance is to take place. It must be responsive to the particularities of the state and structure of domination in a particular society.

If anarchism is a tactical political philosophy, then is it one of a particular kind. There are, it seems to me, at least two other related commitments of anarchist thought. The first is that anarchism operates on the presupposition of the equality of everyone. This idea, which will be discussed at greater length in the section on Rancière, is related to the second one: that the outcome of political change must be grounded in its process. This is often characterized with the term *prefiguration*, or with the apt slogan “Be the change you want to

see.” The idea is that one cannot expect to overthrow the current state of domination first and then afterward go about creating a better or healthier set of social relationships. Those relationships have to be cultivated in the course of political change. We must relate to one another (and, I would argue, to the adversary—a point that often goes missing in anarchist practice) as the equals we take one another to be during the process of political resistance and change if we want to create a society of equals. The idea of revolution first and equality later has been as decisively refuted by the history of twentieth century revolutions as one could ask. Anarchist political philosophy and practice require that equality be practiced in our relations with one another on the ground, during the course of political resistance, if we expect to wind up with a society of equals when the process is over.

These two commitments have a corollary, which is relevant to anarchism’s relationship to poststructuralism. If people are to be seen as equal and the product of resistance must be prefigured in the process, then political change is primarily—if not exclusively—a bottom-up process rather than a top-down one. People are not emancipated by others, either in a revolution through which others emancipate them or through a leadership that shows them where their good lies, but rather through taking on the task, sometimes exhilarating and sometimes arduous, of participating in their own emancipation. This participation is, of course, a social one. People don’t emancipate themselves by themselves, but with and alongside one another. However, this emancipation is something they *do*; it is not something that happens to them. Moreover, since anarchism is a tactical rather than a strategic political philosophy, they do this in a variety of ways and across a variety of fronts. In the end, as the British anarchist Colin Ward counsels, “There is no final struggle, only a series of partisan struggles on a variety of fronts.”<sup>4</sup> And however that happens, it happens by the people rather than for them.

With this concept of anarchism in hand, then, we are prepared to turn to poststructuralist thought in order to ask about the relationships that might be drawn between the two. In doing so, I will start with Michel Foucault, whose ties to anarchism—despite his own rejection of it as a framework for political resistance—are, to my mind, the deepest among the poststructuralists.

### Michel Foucault

During his life and career, Foucault showed little sympathy with anarchism. In his “*Society Must Be Defended*” lectures, he notes in his closing remarks,

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4 C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1988), 26.

"The most racist forms of socialism were, therefore, Blanquism of course, and then the Commune, and then anarchism—much more so than social democracy, much more so than the Second International, and much more so than Marxism itself."<sup>5</sup> Despite this rejection, however, Foucault's work ties deeply with anarchist thought as I have characterized it. There are two fundamental characteristics to his thought that are important in this regard: his tactical political approach and his view of power as productive. The first intersects with anarchism; the second deepens it.

Foucault is a philosophically oriented historian, or genealogist as he thinks of it. Attuned to the trajectory of philosophy and its legacy, he constructs histories of how the ways in which we have come to think of ourselves are derived from on-the-ground practices rather than natural human constraints or orientations. Following the theoretical and semantic lead of Friedrich Nietzsche, Foucault constructs genealogies that follow diverse practices in their convergence to form the taken-for-granted realities that constitute our own ethos. A genealogy, he notes, is "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc. without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs its empty sameness throughout the course of history."<sup>6</sup> In order to illustrate this, let me offer a brief, and undoubtedly inadequate, summary of one of his most important texts, *Discipline and Punish*.

Before the rise of capitalism and modern states, punishment occurred mostly through various forms of physical torture. Every crime was an offense against the body of the sovereign, and so the sovereign had to establish his power over and against the body of the criminal. That establishment generally took the form of death and/or gruesome torture. However, with the rise of capitalism and the necessity of protecting property, spectacular punishments such as torture came to seem both needlessly cruel and inefficient. After all, it took a lot of resources to engage in some of the elaborate tortures of the pre-modern period. What was needed instead was a form of punishment that would be gentler and more efficient. And one of the ways it would need to be more efficient is that it had to fit people who committed crimes back into society as productive members.

This fitting back into society required a lot of intervention. There had to be an enclosed place—that is, the prison—in which there could be developed techniques for assessing an individual, finding out what he was like, and then

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5 M. Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France 1976–67* [1997], trans. D. Macey (New York: Picador 2003), 262.

6 M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. C. Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 117.

training him to be different. As Foucault recounts it in *Discipline and Punish*, these techniques migrated from monasteries, hospitals, the old leper houses, and the military to the prison. The techniques helped give rise to certain kinds of knowledge, which later became known collectively as the human sciences. In particular, the study of psychology helped get its start in the prison. Psychology's job was to contribute to understanding what people were like, what made them perform optimally, and what ways people deviated from the optimal.

In the course of all this, the twin concepts of the normal and the abnormal were established. Whereas earlier in the history of punishment, the key distinction was between the permitted and the forbidden, now it became between the normal and the abnormal. These two sets of concepts function very differently. With the earlier distinction, if one committed a crime, then one was punished mercilessly. Otherwise, one was ignored, left alone. With the rise of the distinction between the normal and the abnormal, however, that is no longer true. Almost nobody is completely normal; or, otherwise put, almost everyone is abnormal in some way, deviating from optimal functioning. Therefore, almost everyone is subject to being watched, monitored, intervened upon, trained, and rehabilitated.

There are two lessons we might draw from this quick overview of *Discipline and Punish*. The first is that what might appear to be a natural way of looking at human beings—as being more or less normal—is instead a historical one. The second, and more important for our purposes, is that this way of looking at human beings has important political implications. The distinction between the normal and the abnormal is not just politically neutral. It functions to allow various authorities, whether they are psychologists or social workers or school personnel or human resource managers, to check up on us, study us, mold us in the image of optimal functioning. That is to say, it allows us to be dominated.

This domination is not the only way in which Foucault thinks we are dominated. *Discipline and Punish* describes one strand of domination, the one that arises through a collusion (although not a conspiratorial one) among the prison, the psychological and sociological sciences, schools, and workplaces. In other works, he constructs other genealogies that form other types of domination. For instance, in the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*, he begins to trace the ways in which we come to think of ourselves as primarily sexual beings and the ways in which that way of thinking constrains who we might be. In his volume of lectures entitled *The Birth of Biopolitics*, he follows the rise of neoliberalism and suggests ways in which this is forming us to be subjects in a post-disciplinary world—a world where the normalization he describes in *Discipline and Punish* is beginning to wane in favor of other ways of constructing our subjectivity.

There is another aspect to this genealogical approach to domination, one that carries the analysis of domination further than traditional anarchism has. The power that dominates us inasmuch as it is psychologically or sexually grounded is not something exercised upon us from without. It is partly constitutive of who we are. In other words, power does not just happen to us; it *is* us. Where there is domination (and not all forms of power should be thought of as dominating), it is often that we dominate ourselves rather than that we are dominated. This aspect of domination is not one that appears in the classical anarchists: Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, etc. In the nineteenth century, George Crowder has argued, classical anarchism was in the throes of a progressivist view of history and a benign view of human nature. Roughly, the idea was that humans are essentially good, that power represses the goodness of human nature from the outside, and that removing that power will allow for the liberation of the expression of that good human nature. This view is grounded in “the optimistic belief, generated by the rise of scientism, that moral truth, seen as inherent in the laws of nature, will eventually be the object of universal agreement.”<sup>7</sup>

The twentieth century largely jettisoned this view, whose influence can be seen not only on classical anarchism but also on theories as diverse as those of Karl Marx and Auguste Comte. Foucault’s particular way of breaking with this view is not only to see human nature as far more plastic and malleable than the view implies, but also—and this is his particular contribution—to posit power as not only repressive but also productive. This means that power is not just applied to us. To one extent or another, it determines who we are. However, Foucault does more than this. His genealogies do not simply *claim* that power is productive. They *show* how power has produced us to be the particular kinds of people we are in the current period. As he put the point in the first volume of his history of sexuality, “The aim of the inquiries that will follow is to move less toward a ‘theory’ of power than toward an ‘analytics’ of power: that is, toward a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and toward a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis.”<sup>8</sup>

One implication of this view is that not all power is bad or problematic. If power operates everywhere, producing us in various ways, we should resist the idea that everything that involves power is a matter of domination. The question is not one of whether there is power involved, but instead whether there is domination: deleterious operations of power. Foucault sometimes uses the

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7 G. Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 4.

8 M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* [1976], trans. R. Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978), 82.

term “intolerable” to refer to operations of power that are worthy of resistance. Although he does not define the intolerable or even tell us how to recognize it, he clearly distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable configurations of power relationships. As we will see, Rancière, influenced by Foucault’s thought, takes up the normative (not to be confused with normalizing) baton here in order to offer a view that, I believe, is in accordance with a Foucaultian genealogical approach.<sup>9</sup>

Foucault, then, does not, as many anarchists do, offer any program for resistance to the kinds of dominations to which we are subject. He takes his task to be the more modest one of offering specific analyses of how we arrived at the particular shores on which we now live, so that those who struggle have a better understanding of the context of that struggle. However, he clearly saw his genealogies as having political implications. In one interview, he says, “I would like to say something about the functions of any diagnosis concerning the present. It does not consist in a simple characterization of what we are but, instead—by following lines of fragility in the present—in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is. In this sense, any description must always be made in accordance with these kinds of virtual fracture which open up the space of freedom understood as a space of concrete freedom, i.e. a space of possible transformation.”<sup>10</sup>

In spite of himself, then, Foucault winds up intersecting with central tenets of anarchist thought. Although critical of capitalism, he sees domination as coming from various points that are irreducible to a single Archimedean point and he does not credit intellectuals with the sole grasp of the way forward (in contrast to Leninist-inflected Marxist views). Anarchists, in turn, have much to learn from Foucault’s specific intellectual engagements and his view of power as productive. His analyses open up avenues not only for understanding our present and the dominations to which we are currently subject, but also for noticing the “fractures” in those dominations that can invite various forms of resistance to them.

### Gilles Deleuze

If Foucault’s work is founded on a certain resistance to ontological posits, Deleuze’s work embraces ontology. For Foucault, the genealogical project

9 I discuss this issue at greater length in T. May, “Equality as a Foucaultian Value: The Relevance of Rancière,” *Philosophy Today* 51 (Supplement 2007): 133–139.

10 M. Foucault, “Critical Theory/Intellectual History,” in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, ed. L. Kritzman (London: Routledge, 1988), 36.

consists in showing how what are taken to be ontological necessities (particularly human ontological necessities) are, in fact, historical legacies. Deleuze, by contrast, works precisely at the ontological level. In a period that was often characterized by talk of “the end of philosophy” or at least “the exhaustion of metaphysics,” Deleuze was an unapologetic creator of ontological concepts. What distinguishes his work, and brings it into dialogue with anarchism, are the kinds of ontological concepts he created and in particular the ontological framework he built out of them.

To canvass Deleuze’s various ontologies—which vary from work to work—would be well beyond what can be accomplished here. However, his general ontological view is broadly consistent across his works. It is, to be sure, elusive. However, understanding it is central to his thought and to an ability to assess his contribution to anarchism. The summary I offer here, although lacking in Deleuze’s nuance, will, I hope give a sense of how an anarchist might think ontologically.

In Deleuze’s view, the fundamental mistake of previous ontologies is to conceive identity as fundamental and difference as derivative. For instance, we think of a table and a chair as having identities as tables and chairs, and consider difference to be the difference between these two identities. This view sees the world (universe, cosmos, Being) as composed primarily of stable identities that, as we might say, are what they are and not something else. This does not mean that they cannot be changed or altered. What it does imply, however, is that their stability (or something stable within them, such as their substance) is ontologically primary.

Such a view has two weaknesses. First, it does not adequately capture the multiplicity of things. By this I mean not only the various different things that exist, but also the multiplicity within each thing that exists. Second, and more important for anarchism, it blunts creativity. It doesn’t allow for the kinds of radical experimentation that can be engaged in. In order to remedy these defects, Deleuze argues that we must conceive of difference as primary rather than secondary, and of identities as derivative from this more fundamental difference, or difference in itself. As he says in *Difference and Repetition*, “Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself.”<sup>11</sup>

How can one think of Being as difference? What is this difference that lies beneath and within all identities? One way to approach it would be by means of an example. The human brain, at infancy, is capable of developing many different kinds of synaptic connections. The connections that will be developed help determine the kind of person that results. It is through the reinforcement

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11 G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* [1968], trans. P. Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 36.

of certain synaptic pathways—a form of habituation—that creates stable paths, which in turn help create the kinds of behavior, reactions, emotions, etc. that characterize a particular individual. How shall we think of this infant brain before the carving of specific synaptic paths?

Here are two ways *not* to think of it: as a blank slate and as a specific set of possibilities one of which is chosen through habituation. It isn't a blank slate because one can't make just anything out of it. For instance, one can't make a dog consciousness out of a human brain. And it isn't a set of specific possibilities because, after all, where would those possibilities lie? In what part of the brain would they exist? Put another way, there aren't a set, however large, of specific possibilities that somehow *exist*, one of which gets realized as the brain is subject to experience. Instead, as Deleuze would put it, the infant brain is a virtual field that is actualized in a particular way as it develops.

The important distinction Deleuze insists on, then, is between the virtual that is actualized and the possible that is realized. For Deleuze, there are no pre-existing possibilities that get realized but instead a virtual field that is actualized in one way or another. The field that is actualized is neither blank nor "pre-carved," as it were: it is not a field of nothing and it is not a field of identities among which one will be chosen. This field is, instead, a field of difference, of difference in itself. Deleuze sometimes calls it a field of relations, claiming, for instance in his book on David Hume, "Whether as relations of ideas or as relations of objects, relations are always external to their terms."<sup>12</sup>

This idea is an elusive one, and it takes a while to get one's mind wrapped around it. If we think of it as something positive (and so not a blank slate) and yet without particular possible identities, then we can get a feel for it. And when we do, we can see its application not only to the infant brain but all over. Deleuze periodically uses the example of genes as an illustration. As the Human Genome Project discovered, we are not simply a product of our genes. Rather, our genetic heritage forms a field whose actualization into ourselves is dependent on the ways in which they interact with one another in reproduction and with the environment. A weather system is a differential field that can be actualized in a multitude of ways, which is one reason the weather is often difficult to predict. This does not mean that there can be no prediction—once again, a field of difference is not a blank slate. What it means is that there is often, if not always, more going on in people, weather systems, political arrangements, geological formations, friendships, etc., than people can predict, and that in certain cases entirely unpredictable actualizations can occur.

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12 G. Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature* [1953], trans. C. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 66.



One of the most fascinating examples is offered by the Nobel Laureate in chemistry Ilya Prigogine. He describes the behavior of certain gasses under conditions far from equilibrium, e.g., in conditions of intense energy. There are two gasses, call them red and blue. Put them in a tank with a slot separating the two gasses, with red on one side and blue on the other. Then make a small hole in the slot, so that the gasses can permeate. Under normal conditions, eventually one will get a purplish hue throughout. However, in conditions of intense energy, the gasses will switch sides at regular intervals: red/blue becoming blue/red and then back again.

Consider how odd this is. The gas molecules are reacting to the behavior of one another and of the other gasses at regular intervals as though there were communication going on between them. And yet the molecules are not conscious. How might this communication occur? What Deleuze would say is that the gas molecules form a field of difference rather than a distinct set of identities, and that that field can be actualized in different and unpredictable ways in different conditions. And, in fact, that is how Prigogine and his colleague Isabelle Stengers characterize it. "Science, which describes the transformations of energy under the sign of equivalence, must admit, however, that only *difference* can produce effects, which would in turn be differences themselves."<sup>13</sup>

So far our discussion of Deleuze has centered on his ontology. One might ask here what contribution such an ontology would make to anarchism. In approaching this question, let's first recall that Deleuze's ontology of difference addresses the same concern that drove Foucault away from ontological commitments: the worry that ontology would privilege given identities. If Foucault shows how the identities that are given to us as natural are actually historical products, then Deleuze posits an ontology that makes those identities actualizations of a virtual field that could have, and could still be, actualized differently. He de-stabilizes identities ontologically rather than genealogically. Moreover, since an actualization does not exhaust the virtual field—the virtual always remains coiled within the actual—then any given arrangement can be actualized differently.

Given Deleuze's ontology, we don't know what other actualizations might be derived from a given virtual. This is because it is a field of difference rather than particular possible identities. So what we must do is experiment. We take the ways of living that are on offer as only one set of actualizations of ways of living, and seek to experiment with others. For Deleuze, political arrangements are always constraining because they are always presenting particular actualizations as necessary. However, if we adopt Deleuze's ontology, then we are

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13 I. Prigogine and I. Stengers, *La Nouvelle Alliance: Métamorphose de la science* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), 27. Translation mine.

spared participating in such an assumption of necessity. Instead, we are free to ask the question of how we might live otherwise.

It is at this point that Deleuze's ontology comes into contact with Foucault's genealogy. In fact, both Deleuze and Foucault are committed to the idea of politics as experimentation, and for much the same reason: one cannot predict, program, or create a blueprint for the future. For Foucault this is because the network of intersecting practices is so multifarious that one can never be sure of the effects of one's own practices. History is full of unintended effects. The particular rise of psychology traced by *Discipline and Punish* is one of them. For Deleuze, the ontological field as a field of difference outstrips the kinds of identities that a given set of concepts can capture. A progressive politics, then, is a politics of experimentation with alternative ways of living together, and indeed of living. There is no single point of resistance or change that one can safely predict will change the whole, no revolution that is likely to end all revolutions. As Ward has told us, "There is no final struggle, only a series of partisan struggles on a variety of fronts."

In one sense, then, we might take Deleuze to be the positive ontologist that complements Foucault's negative genealogies. This would not be misleading, as far as it goes. While both Foucault and Deleuze abjure specific political recommendations and programs, Foucault's work is almost entirely critical. He offers us genealogies of our present that give insight into how we arrived where we are, but, with brief exceptions, he does not envision or recommend particular changes. While it is true that Deleuze rarely makes specific recommendations, his ontology is one of positivity, of joy as he sometimes puts it. If Foucault's works point us critically toward experimenting with alternatives, Deleuze's ontology invites us enticingly toward seeking what else we might make of ourselves. If, as Deleuze cites Spinoza as arguing, "We do not even know of what a body is capable"<sup>14</sup> then the ontology Deleuze constructs stands as an incitement to discover more of what our bodies might be capable.

This does not mean that Deleuze does not have anything critical to say, in particular about capitalism. Especially in his work with Félix Guattari, he mounts important criticisms of the workings and effects of capitalism. In particular, and unsurprising given his ontology, Deleuze is concerned with the way we are controlled by capitalism in order that we are barred from experimenting with new forms of living and being. In *Anti-Oedipus*, for instance, Deleuze and Guattari argue that one of the ways capitalism maintains itself is by "Oedipalizing" us, rendering our actions as repetitions of Freud's Oedipal family drama, and thus containing us within the limits marked out by

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14 G. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* [1968], trans. M. Joughin (New York: Zone, 1990), 226.

psychoanalytic discourse. The reason for such containment is that the capitalist system itself destroys the traditional hierarchies of previous economic orders—as Marx argued, “all that is solid melts into air”<sup>15</sup>—and so threatens to undo itself in its own unfolding. Through Oedipalization, capitalism can continue to operate by making us into its subjects. Thus *Anti-Oedipus* serves at once as a critique of capitalism and of a certain psychoanalytic discourse that was prominent in France at the time of its 1972 publication.

Such critique, however, should not be seen apart from Deleuze's larger philosophical project, which is not primarily negative or critical but rather an attempt to think the creative ground that undergirds our lives and our world. For Deleuze, the problem of capitalism is not fundamentally one of exploitation or hierarchy but rather of being stifling. (I don't want to imply here that Deleuze doesn't care at all about exploitation or hierarchy—thus the qualifier “fundamentally.”) Domination, for Deleuze, is not simply a matter of inequality, nor is it simply a denial of liberty. More important, it is a matter of hardening and imposing the actual at the expense of the virtual.

### Jean-Francois Lyotard

Lyotard's work, although nearly as prominent as that of Deleuze during the post-1968 period in France, has been in eclipse since his death in 1998. Many of his works were responses to particular intellectual trends of the time. In particular, among his central works, the first, *Discourse, Figure* (1971) utilized psychoanalytic terminology in a discussion of art and its political possibilities. The second, *Libidinal Economy* (1974), was a response to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. His most well-known work, *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), and the following major text *The Differend* (1983) constitute, to my mind, both his most original thought and his most significant conversational partners with anarchism. Although *The Postmodern Condition* is more famous, I will focus here on the later text, since it contains both an anarchist approach to our social lives and a relevant critique of capitalism.

*The Differend* is focused on language, and in particular on what Lyotard calls different “genres” of language: different ways in which language is used, or what the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein called “language games.” Lyotard isolates several of these genres. In particular, he is concerned with the cognitive genre—the genre of knowledge and science—and the ethical genre—which

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15 K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* [1848], *Marxists Internet Archive*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/choi.htm>.

he associates with the ethical position of Emmanuel Levinas. Genres are not reducible to one another or to a “meta-genre” that would include them all. Each has its integrity and should be taken in its own terms and on its own merits. Borrowing the idea of judgment as navigating the archipelago of discourses from Kant’s Third Critique, Lyotard writes, “Each genre of discourse would be like an island; the faculty of judgment would be, at least in part, like and admiral or a provisioner of ships who would launch expeditions from one island to the next, intended to present to one island what was found (or invented, in the archaic sense of the word) in the other, and which might serve the former as an ‘as-if intuition’ with which to validate it.”<sup>16</sup>

In this view of genres we might be tempted to see the micropolitical approach characteristic of Foucault’s genealogy. This, however, risks an important confusion. For Foucault, the turn to on-the-ground practices in their diversity is an analytic one: through an investigation of particular practices in their historical unfolding and intersection, Foucault hopes to offer us a view of our present. For Lyotard, by contrast, the diversity is not only analytic but also normative. That is, in addition to understanding the diversity of genres it is important to maintain them in their diversity. Among the tasks of politics is that of ensuring that no genre colonize another one, reducing the specificity of the other genre’s operation to its own. This is why judgment is a matter of navigating and, as it were, cross-fertilizing the archipelago of genres rather than bringing them together into a single continent. It is for this reason that Lyotard coins the term *differend*, which he defines this way: “As distinguished from a litigation, a differend would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for a lack of rule of judgment applicable to both arguments.”<sup>17</sup>

While distinct from Foucault’s work in this way, there is also an affinity that should be recognized, one that allows them both to be close to anarchism. This affinity lies at the analytic level, but has consequences for political intervention. For both Foucault and Lyotard, understanding ourselves in the practical (and, inseparable from this, linguistic) unfolding of our lives requires looking at how they are lived, at what shapes them to be the kinds of lives they are in the particular historical configuration in which they exist. This means, among other things, that domination should be understood not only, and perhaps not even primarily, in terms of a single Archimedean point but also at the multifarious levels of people’s daily living. We make and re-make ourselves not only and not even fundamentally through grand structures or what Lyotard

16 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* [1983], trans. G. van den Abbeele (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 130–131.

17 Ibid., xi.

in *The Postmodern Condition* calls “grand narratives,” but rather through the specific practices and genres in which we are immersed. Domination, then, is domination of, through, within, and across these various practices or genres.

Lyotard’s critique of capitalism occurs at this level. Capitalism, for him, is the attempt of a particular genre to colonize other genres, to fold them into itself as a master genre. “Between the phrases of imagination on the one hand, the phrases of technical effectuation on the other, and finally the phrases that follow the rules of the economic genre, there is heterogeneity. Capital subordinates the first two regimens to the third.”<sup>18</sup> By seeking to colonize different genres, capitalism acts as a colonizer of those genres in much the same way that imperial states colonize countries by subsuming indigenous social, economic, and political structures under that of the imperial country.

We should note here that Lyotard’s critique of capitalism converges with his positive analytic in the way Deleuze’s converges with his own ontological view. For Lyotard, there is a value in the diversity of genres. Capitalism, by reducing that diversity, engages in a form of unjust domination. Similarly for Deleuze, there is a value to creation. Capitalism, by constraining that creation (although, as we have seen, in a more tenuous way than earlier formations), engages in an egregious form of domination.

### Jacques Derrida

The turn from Foucault, Deleuze, and Lyotard to Derrida is theoretically a large one, as I have noted. The former three have tied their concerns to politics almost from the beginning of their careers. Derrida, although in retrospect taking deconstruction to be politically inflected, did not make many overt connections to politics until later in his career. He did make political gestures earlier, and I will try to show the political implications of deconstruction in general. However, they are not to my mind as deep, particularly with regard to anarchism, as those of the previous three thinkers.

One of the reasons for this is that Derrida’s thought does not operate on the register of the micropolitical in the way the thought of Foucault, Deleuze, and Lyotard does. As we have seen, although Foucault and Lyotard differ in the use they make of diverse, on-the-ground practices, each of them focuses on that level in their work. As a result, their view of domination allows for different forms of domination, irreducible to a central point such as Marx’s concept of exploitation. Derrida, by contrast, sees his specific deconstructions as

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 175.

examples of the entire structure of “Western metaphysics,” by which he means the broad sweep of the European (and later American) philosophical thought. However, this picture needs to be nuanced a bit. In a sense, Derrida does allow for different types of domination. What characterizes them, however, is, as we shall see, that they all have the same broad structure.

Before turning to the political implications of deconstruction, we should pause over its character. As in the case of Deleuze’s ontology, Derrida’s contribution to anarchist thought is rooted in the deeper philosophical concerns animating his thought and not simply the overt political analyses. And, as is also the case with Deleuze, his philosophical framework is an elusive one that will take a moment to unfold.

As Derrida sees it, the Western philosophical tradition (and, by extension, much of the entire Western intellectual tradition) is animated by a set of exclusions that operate in a particular way. To put the point succinctly before drawing it out, Western thought (or, as he calls it, metaphysics) works by excluding certain terms or elements and privileging others, but—and this is the key—the excluded terms or elements are necessary constituents of the excluding ones. That is, the privileged elements can only operate on the basis of incorporating aspects of the elements they exclude, so that those excluded elements appear both inside and outside the system of thought being considered.

As an example, consider Derrida’s deconstruction of Husserl in *Speech and Phenomena*. For Husserl, the philosophical project is (and Derrida seems to see that as the inescapable project of all of metaphysics) to offer an absolute foundation for thought. Much like Descartes, Husserl seeks to find an indubitable grounding upon which our knowledge could be constructed in order to tell what we can know with certainty and what we cannot know with certainty. The key—and privileged—element in Husserl’s thought is presence. For Husserl, what is indubitable is what is present to us.

Now in order to grasp his thought, we need to be clear about what Husserl thinks is present to us. It is not, for instance, chairs and tables that are present to us. We may well be wrong in thinking that there is really a chair or table there. We could, after all, be mistaken or hallucinating or dreaming. What is present to us in the sense that interests Husserl is what we might call a chair-appearance or a table-appearance. Although we may doubt the existence of the chair, we cannot doubt that we are having a chair-appearance at a particular moment.

The details of why or how this is so need not detain us. What is crucial here for Derrida is that this presence is also based on a particular absence that it seeks to exclude. And because of this, the presence cannot be a pure presence. And because of this, it cannot be indubitable. What is this absence that helps constitute presence? One aspect of it is temporal. The present moment in

which the chair-appearance appears is constituted not only by the immediate (temporal) present. It can't be, because the immediate present is vanishingly small. The present, in order to be experienced as a present, must also contain the instants just before the present and, according to both Derrida and Husserl himself, the instants that are anticipated. But those instants aren't actually there. They are absent, but they are an absence that helps constitute the present. Thus, the present that is the ground of Husserl's thought is partially constituted by an absence that it seeks to exclude. And not only Husserl's thought. As Derrida remarks in *Speech and Phenomena*, "The history of being as presence, as self-presence in absolute knowledge, as consciousness of self in the infinity of *parousia*—this history is closed ... *The history of metaphysics* ... is closed when this infinite absolute appears to itself as its own death."<sup>19</sup>

On the surface it might seem to be a stretch to extend deconstruction to politics. However, even in his earlier texts, Derrida gestures at a political character of deconstruction. For instance, in an interview, he claims "in a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a vis-à-vis, but rather with a violent hierarchy."<sup>20</sup> As his career unfolds, that hierarchy is recognized in its operation not only on presence but also upon marginalized figures such as people of color and immigrants. Regarding the former, a case in point could be the appeal to a certain quality that is used to exclude while also being constitutive of the privileged identity of whites. For instance, in the Euro-American world virility is stereotypically ascribed to black men. That virility is appealed to in accounting for the "animality" of blacks, of their being less than entirely human (i.e., white). However, at the same time virility is seen to be a part of white male identity, and in fact constitutive of it. Think for instance of the virility associated with certain explorers or athletes that gives them a superiority that is taken to be representative of "white culture" or "white civilization."

In the case of immigrants, Derrida himself has offered a deconstructive example in his book *The Other Heading*. There he notes that Europe, which once considered itself the capital (head) of the world, can no longer do so. It must recognize its infiltration by others and, in fact, its constitutive infiltration by those others. However, on the other hand, Europe cannot simply be dissolved into tiny cultural communities. It must instead navigate the *aporia* of being at once a single Europe and yet a fractured one, without a common identity. Later, in his book *Of Hospitality*, Derrida considers the vexed and contradictory

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19 J. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* [1967], trans. D. Allison (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 102.

20 J. Derrida, *Positions* [1972], trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 41.

task of giving hospitality to others, and in particular to the stranger (in political terms, the immigrant).

These examples should not be taken as showing simply that there are marginalized others that need to be recognized or respected. Nor is it just a recognition of the different kinds of domination that often occur. Those matter, but they do not exhaust the deconstructive story. What is crucial is that those others, those marginalized, are not simply outside the system but also, in their very otherness, constitutive of it. This constitution, moreover, is more than simply an oppositional one. It is not that who I am (white, European, male) is to be understood only by contrast to what I exclude (people of color, non-Europeans, women); more deeply, it is that the very material of my constitution is dependent on a dynamic that at the same time and in the same gesture both appropriates and excludes the other in the very character of that otherness.

Here we can see both the possibilities and limits for a micropolitical approach in deconstruction. It is micropolitical in the sense that it allows for different kinds of exclusions—immigrants, women, etc. However, the micropolitical character of it assumes always the same structure of domination: marginalizing while at the same time appropriating. In this sense, it lacks the theoretical diversity—because it lacks the historical contextualization—of the poststructuralism of Foucault, Lyotard, and even the ontologist Deleuze (because for him particular historical actualizations of the virtual affect the character of the virtual itself).

As I mentioned before, Derrida's later writings often are more overtly political, especially in such texts as *Specters of Marx* and *Rogues*. The former, based on a series of lectures and published in 1993, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, criticizes the triumphalism of neoliberal capitalism in the wake of the collapse of communism. It calls attention to the ills of current capitalist society and finds hope in what he calls a "New International" (in reference to the earlier Marxist Internationals). Of this New International, he writes, "It is an untimely link, without status, without title, and without name, barely public even if it is not clandestine ... without party, without country, without national community ... a kind of counter-conjuration, in the (theoretical and practical) critique of the state of international law, the concepts of State and nation, and so forth: in order to renew this critique, and especially to radicalize it."<sup>21</sup> We should not misunderstand Derrida here. He is not arguing for an overthrow of the state and international law, but rather, in the spirit (if not the letter) of Marx, for a deconstructive critique that is messianic: it works toward a justice that can never be fully realized or instantiated, a justice that in texts

21 J Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* [1993], trans. P. Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 85–86.



like *Rogues* he calls a democracy-to-come, in which “to-come not only points to the promise but also suggests that democracy will never exist, in the sense of a present existence: not because it will be deferred but because it will always remain aporetic in its structure.”<sup>22</sup>

One might ask how a deconstructive politics of the type Derrida discusses could be practiced. Of course, such a politics could not be realized in practice in the sense that it could be instantiated in a specific set of institutions or programs. It is more a *style* of practice, a self-critical style that seeks to carry on the critical work of people like Marx (and anarchists) while recognizing both the necessity and ultimate impossibility of realizing particular visions of a just or democratic society. This is not, as Derrida notes, because they are infinitely deferred, but instead because the attempt to bring such a vision to full presence would fail to recognize the absence that is constitutive of it. In this way, Derrida’s later political writings have affinities with, and are in fact grounded in, his earlier philosophical deconstructive work.

### Post-Poststructuralism: Jacques Rancière

Recent developments in French thought have kept to a political register. In addition to a currently ascendant liberal strain of political thought instantiated in writers like Luc Ferry, Alain Renault, and Alain Finkielkraut, others, such as Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière, have kept the radical tradition alive. Rancière in particular has, in a gesture that is singular in recent French thought, invoked the term anarchist in characterizing some of his commitments. For instance, in his book *Hatred of Democracy*, a critique of those who seem frightened by the idea of rule by the people, he writes approvingly, “Democracy first of all means this: anarchic ‘government,’ one based on nothing other than the absence of every title to govern.”<sup>23</sup> In order to grasp the anarchist character of Rancière’s politics, we need to keep in mind what is for him a central distinction, that between policing and politics. It is only the latter that is democratic—and in fact it is its very nature to be democratic, that is, anarchic.

“Politics,” Rancière writes, “is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this distribution another name. I propose to

22 J. Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* [2003], tr. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), 86.

23 J. Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy* [2005], trans. S. Corcoran (London: Verso, 2006), 41.

call it *the police*.”<sup>24</sup> We can see here, in the rubric of the police, the traditional project that often goes under the name of distributive justice. The distribution of goods and the justification of that distribution are the tasks of theories of justice from Thomas Hobbes to John Rawls. For Rancière, however, this traditional task is not a politics worthy of the name, precisely because it is not really a democratic politics. But what, then, would be a democratic politics? Rancière writes:

I ... propose to reserve the term *politics* for an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing ... political activity is always a mode of expression that undoes the perceptible divisions of the police order by implementing a basically heterogeneous assumption ... an assumption that, at the end of the day, itself demonstrates the contingency of the order, the equality of any speaking being with any other speaking being.<sup>25</sup>

For Rancière, in brief, politics is collective action under the presupposition of the equality of speaking beings. Political activity in this sense is always a challenge to a police order, because police orders operate under the presupposition of inequality, the presupposition that some people deserve better roles or placements than others, where those deserving people are white, male, heterosexual, Christian, or whatever.

As an example of politics in Rancière’s sense, we might look at the lunch counter sit-ins of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. The sit-ins consisted in black and white people together approaching segregated lunch counters in the South and attempting to order lunch. Of course they were not served, and many were subjected to humiliation and even violence. However, if we look at the activity itself, we see that it presupposes the equality of black people to whites in the activity of ordering lunch.

Collective action under the presupposition of equality should be rigorously distinguished from the demand for equality. This distinction lies not in the goals of a particular movement, but instead in what might call its form. Politics as Rancière conceives it does not rely on the response of an authority in order to take place. Its form is not so much one of seeking equality but of acting as though it were already there. In this sense, the lunch counter sit-ins are an example of politics but writing a letter to the owner of a restaurant or a local politician demanding desegregation of lunch counters would not be. The

24 J. Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* [1995], trans. J. Rose (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 28.

25 *Ibid.*, 29–30.

former enacts equality, even if it also demands it. The latter demands equality without enacting it.

We can see, then, why Rancière sees democracy as anarchic government, as government by those who lack the title to govern. He does not argue that there should be no government, but rather that governing, if it is to be democratic, must take place under the presupposition of everyone being entitled to govern. This captures the anarchist idea that nobody is more entitled to govern than anyone else, without having to argue that all forms of governance are equally suspect.

The anarchist character of Rancière's thought runs deeper than as a critique of traditional state governance. It also implicitly embraces two other characteristics that I have isolated as central to anarchism: politics as a bottom-up affair and the importance of process. To challenge a hierarchical police order with a movement that expresses the presupposition of equality takes place not through a party that directs others—Rancière's break from his Marxist teacher Louis Althusser occurred precisely over his rejection of an avant-garde party—but rather through a collective action that creates a common subject. In fact, Rancière's term *subjectification* is meant to capture this process: "By subjectification I mean the production through a series of actions of a body and a capacity for enunciation not previously identifiable within a given field of experience, whose identification is thus part of the reconfiguration of the field of experience."<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, if the action occurs under the presupposition of equality, then it must unfold in a process that respects that equality. It is the form of the action—the character of the process—that determines whether it is politics in Rancière's sense, not the outcome or the content of the demands. In fact, regarding outcome, Rancière distinguishes between an action or a movement as political and a *successful* political movement when he says that, "a verification [of equality] becomes 'social,' causes equality to have a real social effect, only when it mobilizes an *obligation* to hear."<sup>27</sup> While this might be a bit exaggerated—after all, as Rancière recognizes, the very acting upon the presupposition of equality can have an emancipatory effect on its participants—it does capture the distinction between enacting democratic politics and success.

We should also recognize that, just as Deleuze might be seen as providing a positive ontological counterpoint to Foucault's critical orientation, Rancière provides a positive normative yardstick to distinguish dominating types of power from non-dominating ones. The former are hierarchical; they

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>27</sup> J. Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics* [1992], trans. L. Heron (London: Verso, 1995), 86.

presuppose the inequality of people. This is one of the problems associated with normalization, alongside its constraining character. Politics in Rancière's sense, then, provides both a challenge to the forms of domination whose history Foucault traces and a way of distinguishing exercises of power Foucault finds intolerable from those that are not. Alongside Foucault's critical work, then, Rancière provides a framework for a contemporary anarchist political thought that remains engaged with the specific forms of domination that form our historical legacy.

## Conclusion

The central claim of this chapter is not that the poststructuralist (and post-poststructuralist) views canvassed here are self-consciously anarchist. In fact, only Rancière has embraced the term, and that only in the context of specific analyses. Rather, it is that poststructuralism has much to offer anarchism, and can be seen, as I argued in my earlier book, as a continuation of the anarchist tradition. Although I have sometimes been saddled with the label of "post-anarchist," I believe there is nothing "post" about the anarchist orientation of much of poststructuralist thought. Rather, it is a continuation of the anarchist tradition, deepening it in ways but also able to be informed by self-consciously anarchist thought. Read alongside each other, traditional anarchism and post-structuralism offer us ways of considering who we are, how we got here, and how we might move on without the illusions of a romantic utopianism or the despair that our neoliberal context would seek to foist upon us.

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# Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy

*Paul McLaughlin*

## The Problem

In order to discuss the relationship between “anarchism” and “analytic philosophy,” I open with a statement of what I take these concepts to mean—or, rather, what I take the associated phenomena to be. Put bluntly, I take *both* phenomena to be *both* real and ideal. Thus, anarchism as such can be understood as both political movement (henceforth “Anarchism”) and political theory (henceforth “anarchism”). Similarly, analytic philosophy as such can be understood as both intellectual tradition (henceforth “Analytic Philosophy,” or “*AP*” for short) and theoretical procedure (henceforth “analytic philosophy” or “*ap*” for short). Interesting questions can be asked about the relationship between Anarchism and anarchism.<sup>1</sup> However, in this chapter I have nothing to say about Anarchism: doing so would contribute little (if anything) to our understanding of the relationship between anarchism as such and analytic philosophy as such. As for the relationship between *AP* and *ap*, this will be taken up below, since it informs our understanding of the relationship between anarchism and analytic philosophy as such.

In this chapter, in other words, I discuss the relationship between anarchism (a specific political theory) and both *AP* (a specific intellectual tradition) and *ap* (a specific theoretical procedure). There is little to be said about the relationship between either *AP* or *ap* and Anarchism (a specific political movement) so this political movement is left out of the subsequent account. But what I hope to demonstrate with respect to the relationship between anarchism and *AP* is that such a relationship exists, however limited, and that it may be of some interest from a strictly historical point of view. And what I hope to demonstrate with respect to the relationship between anarchism and *ap* is that such a relationship may be theoretically fruitful and that it ought to be cultivated by theorists of anarchism to the extent that it is.

For the purposes of the remainder of this chapter, I take “anarchism” to be an unproblematic concept and define it as a particular attitude—namely,

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1 Some of these questions are raised in N. Jun, “Rethinking the Anarchist Canon: History, Philosophy, and Interpretation,” *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* 1 (2013): 82–116.

*skepticism*—to a particular social phenomenon—namely, *authority*. Accordingly, I define anarchism as *skepticism about authority*, or, somewhat more precisely, the belief that authoritative norms, practices, relations, and institutions can be and ought to be called into question with respect to their desirability. Thus, I deny that anarchism is, for example, definable in terms of an oppositional attitude (even towards authority) or a supportive attitude (towards, say, freedom or autonomy or equality). I also deny that the principal object of anarchist concern is a social phenomenon other than authority (such as the state or domination or hierarchy). All of this is, of course, highly contentious.<sup>2</sup> But the focus of this paper is on the relationship between a particular intellectual tradition and theoretical procedure, on the one hand, and a particular political theory, on the other, rather than on that political theory in its own right.

### Analytic Philosophies

I began above by distinguishing between Analytic Philosophy (or *AP*) and analytic philosophy (or *ap*). This *general philosophical* distinction—between what might be termed “a trail of influence”<sup>3</sup> and “a certain way of going on”<sup>4</sup>—is not usually made, at least as explicitly as one might wish. Nevertheless, scholarly attempts to answer the question “What is analytic philosophy [as such]?” typically prioritize *AP* over *ap*, or *ap* over *AP*, and do so implicitly, often to the point of confusing the relevant debate—that is to say, whether this debate concerns matters traditional or theoretical (however the relationship between these matters is to be understood). Thus, Peter Hacker answers the question by prioritizing *AP*:

Most (but not all) of the threads out of which the tapestry of analytic philosophy was woven can be traced back into the more or less remote past. What is most distinctive about the tapestry are the ways in which

2 Further argumentation can be found in the first part of my *Anarchism and Authority* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007). This will be developed in a work-in-progress provisionally entitled *Anarchism and Anarchy*.

3 S. Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century: The Dawn of Analysis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), xiii. On Soames's account, what I designate as *AP* is “a certain historical tradition in which the early work of G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein set the agenda for later philosophers, whose work formed the starting point for the philosophers who followed them.”

4 B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge, 2006), viii. On Williams's account, what I designate as *ap* is a procedure involving “argument, distinctions, and, so far as it remembers to try to achieve it and succeeds, moderately plain speech.”

the various threads are interwoven and the character of the designs ... It is, I suggest, as a dynamic historical movement that analytic philosophy is best understood.<sup>5</sup>

By contrast, Dagfinn Føllesdal answers the question by prioritizing *ap*: “what distinguishes [analytic philosophy] is a particular *way of approaching* philosophical problems, in which arguments and justification play a decisive role. Only in this respect does analytic philosophy differ from other ‘trends’ in philosophy.”<sup>6</sup>

The *explicit* distinction between *AP* and *ap* may yet be inadequate. *AP* and *ap* are themselves complex phenomena. Nevertheless, *AP* is often represented by means of a simple narrative that captures a dramatic plot featuring an extensive cast of heroes and that plays out across a prolonged period of time.<sup>7</sup> The plot includes such episodes as the linguistic turn, ideal language philosophy, logical positivism, ordinary language philosophy, and so on. The heroes include, as a matter of course, G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. They were *arguably* preceded by such heroes as Gottlob Frege, Franz Brentano, and Bernard Bolzano, and *arguably* followed by heroes like Willard van Orman Quine and Noam Chomsky. The story so told stretches back to at least the beginning of the twentieth century, if not the late- or even the mid-nineteenth century, and lasts until at least the 1950s or the 1970s, if not the present—stretching, perhaps, into the foreseeable future.

This simple narrative notwithstanding, from the *historical* perspective, concerning the tradition of *AP*, a distinction probably ought to be made between Analytic Philosophy *as a movement* (or *AP'*) and Analytic Philosophy *as a school* (or *AP<sup>2</sup>*). *AP'* constitutes an organic development—arguably a progressive stage—in the history of philosophy (specifically, at its origins, Austro-German philosophy): an arguable transition in time for the philosophical good through the efforts of a small number of unconventional thinkers. *AP<sup>2</sup>* constitutes an institutional orthodoxy—perhaps the institutionalization of *AP'* beginning in the interwar period—in certain parts of the philosophical world, notably (though not exclusively) the Anglo-Saxon world.

5 P.M.S. Hacker, “Analytic Philosophy: What, Whence, and Whither?” in *The Story of Analytic Philosophy: Plot and Heroes*, eds. A. Biletzki and A. Matarp (London: Routledge, 1998), 14.

6 D. Føllesdal, “Analytic Philosophy: What Is It and Why Should One Engage In It?” in *The Rise of Analytic Philosophy*, ed. H.-J. Glock (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 14.

7 I deliberately adopt the terminology of Biletzki and Matarp here (op. cit., Preface).



In most studies of *AP*, *AP'* and *AP*<sup>2</sup> are conflated.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, *AP* is sometimes criticised for being *too Anglocentric* and *too scholastic*. It is criticised, then, for being culturally and linguistically specific or partial, or even an instrument of cultural imperialism:

[O]n the European continent, or at any rate in what is now called “old Europe,” we encounter fears of Anglo-American “cultural imperialism” among parts of the elites. Perhaps the most significant target of this reaction is the ascendancy of English to a universal *lingua franca* ... Predictably, [this casts] a shadow on the much smaller stage on which the clash between analytic philosophy and its rivals is played out.<sup>9</sup>

*AP* is also criticized for being a narrow scholastic enterprise, an enterprise that is (supposedly) the legitimate monopoly of those who are employed by prestigious schools of higher education. More exactly, *AP* may be criticized for scholasticism at the level of the *school* (or institutional activity), scholasticism at the level of *scholarship* (or intellectual activity, as conditioned by the school), and scholasticism at the level of *scholars* (or interpersonal relations, also as conditioned by the school). At the level of the school itself, Aaron Preston writes:

[T]he normative role of *AP* has shaped academic philosophy principally by guiding decisions about the hiring and retention (i.e., tenure, promotion) of faculty, about the closely related matter of publication (acceptance or rejection), and about pedagogy (the content and manner of philosophical instruction) ... The equation of “analytic” with “good” philosophy in this context reveals the strong connection between the norms of analytic philosophizing and the criteria for good pedagogy and professional success in academic philosophy today.<sup>10</sup>

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8 An explicit example of this conflation can be found in A. Preston, *Analytic Philosophy: The History of an Illusion* (London: Continuum, 2007), 1: “[T]he very fact that *AP* exists as something to be discussed under a single name is historically and hence unalterably—I am tempted to say necessarily—connected to its career in the British and American universities.”

9 H.-J. Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 252. As Glock acknowledges, one consequence of such (perceived) cultural imperialism—on the smaller philosophical stage—was the relatively recent “Sokal affair.”

10 Preston, *Analytic Philosophy*, 15–16.

At the level of scholarship, Hans-Johann Glock writes:

[A] lot of analytic philosophy has descended [into “palpable scholasticism”]. This vice manifests itself in, among other things, the focus on a very narrow range of issues and authors in what are regarded as the leading journals, a general disinclination to explain why these issues and authors are worthy of attention, the tendency to treat many fundamental issues as settled once and for all, and a predilection for technicalities irrespective of their usefulness. Although contemporary analytic philosophy can boast of a flurry of diverse activity, much of it is epiphenomenal and derivative.<sup>11</sup>

By contrast with scholasticism at the level of the school and the level of scholarship, little has been written in the literature on *AP* about scholasticism at the level of scholars, or about the extent to which the school conditions interpersonal relations between Analytic Philosophers. In any event, one may speculate, to begin with, about relations between the many insecure individuals who aspire to attain the few secure positions available within the school, or those individuals who compete for such a scarce resource. The competitive struggle that emerges here is not a war of all against all, but of all those who lack secure employment in prestigious schools against all others who lack secure employment in prestigious schools. It is a struggle in which the favor of those who are in a position to grant, or influence the granting of, secure employment in prestigious schools is curried. Thus, to the extent that this struggle involves anything resembling philosophical engagement, as opposed to bureaucratic maneuvering, it involves argumentation *against* fellow competitors and *for* potential benefactors. This does not necessarily require agreement with the latter and disagreement with the former, but argumentation that takes seriously and respectfully, if not deferentially, the latter and somehow undermines the latter. In this struggle, I suggest, it is *who* one argues with (in person, in professional journals, and so on) that matters, not *what* one argues—contrary to the self-image of Analytic Philosophers.

Taken at face value, the Anglocentric and scholastic criticisms would appear to ignore both the geo-linguistic and radical origins of *AP*<sup>1</sup> and to reduce *AP*—if not analytic philosophy as such—to *AP*<sup>2</sup>. This tendency needs to be countered: our understanding of *AP* needs to be *deschooled*, at least to some degree. A third criticism of *AP*—that, politically, it is *too conservative*—will be examined carefully in the next section.

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11 Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 246.

The ideal phenomenon of *ap* is as complex as the real phenomenon of *AP*. So, from the *theoretical* perspective, concerning the procedure of *ap*, an additional distinction probably ought to be made between analytic philosophy *negatively conceived* (*ap'*) and analytic philosophy *positively conceived* (*ap<sup>2</sup>*). *ap'* constitutes an intellectual reaction against (certain alleged aspects of) traditional philosophy and other forms of non-analytic philosophy (including so-called Continental Philosophy). *ap<sup>2</sup>* constitutes an intellectual vision of an alternative, more or less “scientific” philosophy.

From the negative theoretical perspective, concerning *ap'*, another distinction might be made between analytic philosophy *conceived anti-systematically* (*ap<sup>i</sup>*) and analytic philosophy *conceived anti-speculatively* (*ap<sup>iii</sup>*). *ap<sup>i</sup>* constitutes an intellectual reaction against the (allegedly) systematic nature of traditional philosophy. This reaction does not necessarily involve the rejection of any kind of systematic *ambition*—to develop a more or less comprehensive philosophy in a piecemeal or gradual, step-by-step fashion, for example. (As Glock notes, “piecemeal procedures and systematic ambitions do not preclude each other.”<sup>12</sup>) Rather, it involves the rejection of the systematic *vocation* of philosophers, the belief that the task of the philosopher is to develop a systematic worldview, a comprehensive and coherent “Philosophy.” Glock observes that:

It was the ambition of every self-respecting German philosophy professor in the nineteenth century to leave behind a system of philosophy in at least three volumes: logic, including epistemology; metaphysics[;] and practical philosophy, including aesthetics. This specific ambition is still alien to analytic philosophy.<sup>13</sup>

Incidentally, it should be recalled that this point about anti-systematicity concerns *ap*, not *AP*. The (alleged) historical fact that certain Analytic Philosophers (Glock names Hilary Putnam and Michael Dummett as examples) are systematically-inclined does not invalidate it. Criticism has been leveled at analytic philosophy as such for reasons of anti-systematicity and associated hostility to traditional philosophy:

Traditionally, the overarching goal of philosophy is the rational construction of a general—and in that sense all-embracing—worldview that provides reasonable answers not only to metaphysical but also moral

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 166–167.

questions, thereby serving as a rough-and-ready roadmap orienting the human being toward its *summum bonum*, a life of *eudaimonia*, or “flourishing” ... Whereas traditional philosophy unites the theoretical and the practical as two essential components of a complex whole, AP not only separates them but casts one of them aside as falling beyond the proper scope of philosophy.<sup>14</sup>

In response, one may argue against the claim that (a) the task of the philosopher (or *all philosophers*) is to provide “roadmaps” to human flourishing and that (b) analytic philosophy is necessarily dismissive of practical concerns. Point (a) will be taken up in our discussion of *ap<sup>2ii</sup>* below; point (b) will be established in the next section.

*ap<sup>iii</sup>* constitutes an intellectual reaction against the (allegedly) speculative nature of non-analytic philosophy (including so-called Continental Philosophy). Speculative philosophy in general may be understood in terms of (a) its subject matter, (b) its procedure, (c) its content, and (d) its style. I take it that *ap<sup>iii</sup>* does not constitute a reaction against (a), against what might be thought of as the subject matter of speculative philosophy—the ultimate concerns that preoccupy metaphysicians, for example. Thus, the anti-speculative aspect of *ap* (that is, *ap<sup>iii</sup>*) should not be confused with the anti-metaphysical aspect of *AP*. In any event, *AP* is not uniformly anti-metaphysical. As Glock points out:

The earliest doctrinal conception associates analytic philosophy with the repudiation of metaphysics. [But this doctrine] is absent both at the beginning of analytic philosophy [e.g., Russell] and at present [e.g., E.J. Lowe]. Therefore it does not provide an acceptable characterization of the analytic movement, even though it fits important representatives between the wars [e.g., Rudolf Carnap].<sup>15</sup>

The much-discussed problem of *AP* with speculative metaphysics was arguably a problem with its speculative approach rather than with metaphysical subject matter as such. So, what is alleged to be wrong with the general speculative approach, according to analytic philosophers? We may say that *ap<sup>iii</sup>* constitutes a reaction against the (allegedly) (i) freewheeling procedure, (ii) obscure style, (iii) spurious content, (iv) impressionistic manner, and (v) impatient nature of speculative philosophy. That is to say, *ap<sup>iii</sup>* constitutes a reaction against

14 Preston, *Analytic Philosophy*, 10–11.

15 Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 117, 121.

speculative philosophy in so far as it is (alleged to be): (i) *logically ill-disciplined* (comprising random, disconnected sequences of propositions); (ii) *semantically ill-disciplined* (written in language and employing concepts which are unclear and unclarified); (iii) *epistemically ill-disciplined* (making claims that are unverifiable or unfalsifiable or nonsensical); (iv) *dialogically ill-disciplined* (based on a subjective process of reflection and thus divorced from a critical community of philosophers); and (v) *gradualistically ill-disciplined* (striving for immediate and spectacular insight). Accordingly, speculative philosophy has been equated with poetic, mystical, and quasi-theological discourse—or generally “unscientific” philosophy.

Criticism has been leveled at analytic philosophy as such for reasons of anti-speculativeness and associated hostility to competing philosophical traditions (such as so-called Continental Philosophy). Anti-speculative philosophy is arguably (a) uncritical and (b) uncreative: a philosophy that (a) fails to detect critical connections (or dialectical relations) and (b) fails to generate philosophical insight (or say anything new and interesting); that is, a (a) trivial and (b) banal philosophy. The speculative tradition, by contrast (and whatever might be said of its faults), is arguably critical and creative, marked by a capacity to disclose concealed truths and enlarge the bounds of philosophical thought.

There may be something in this criticism: analytic philosophy (and especially  $AP^2$ , for a number of reasons that have little to do with  $ap^{iii}$  as such) often is a rather tedious affair. But intellectual caution is probably required to satisfy the disciplinary demands of analytic philosophy that will be outlined below. In any case, the claims made for speculative philosophy, for its criticality and creativity, themselves stand in need of substantiation, of evidential support, rather than wild assertion. A speculative case for speculative philosophy is, one might maintain, an inadequate case.

From the positive theoretical perspective, concerning  $ap^2$ , yet another distinction might be made between analytic philosophy (naturalistically) *conceived as Science* ( $ap^{2i}$ ) and analytic philosophy (non-naturalistically) *conceived as theoretical discipline* ( $ap^{2ii}$ ).  $ap^{2i}$  constitutes an intellectual vision of philosophy as part of, or continuous with, or at least modeled on Science (in the narrow sense of this English term). So understood, analytic philosophy shares, supplements and supports, or at least apes the scientific (say, experimental) mode of thought.  $ap^{2ii}$  constitutes an intellectual vision of philosophy as a theoretical discipline or science (in the broader sense of the equivalent German term *Wissenschaft*) with its own set of disciplinary demands. So understood, analytic philosophy is characterized by a distinct (say, argumentative) mode of thought. For the purposes of this paper, we will only flesh out  $ap^{2ii}$ , to avoid

some of the controversies surrounding *ap<sup>2i</sup>* (which is an intellectual vision that is not supported here). We may then wonder exactly what the disciplinary demands of analytic philosophy are supposed to be. An initial clue is provided in the following passage from Stephen P. Schwartz:

[T]he methods [sic] of analytic philosophy [include] clarity of expression, logical argumentation, direct and extensive dialectical interchange among philosophers, and a piecemeal scientific approach to problems ...<sup>16</sup>

Four disciplinary demands (rather than actual “methods,” many of which may enable the analytic philosopher to satisfy these demands) are suggested in this passage. These are: (1) the *semantic* demand for linguistic or conceptual clarity; (2) the *logical* demand for argumentative rigor; (3) the *dialogical* demand for argumentative interaction; and (4) the *gradualistic* demand for cautious, step-by-step argumentation.

Arguably, however, these demands by themselves fail to distinguish analytic philosophy from the discipline of what we might call “analytic rhetoric.” Therefore, a further demand—(5) the *epistemic* demand for some contribution to knowledge or understanding or “wisdom” (as opposed to, say, “mere” persuasion)—is required to distinguish analytic philosophy from analytic rhetoric. *ap<sup>2ii</sup>* thus constitutes an intellectual vision of analytic philosophy as *an argumentative discipline that is subject to logical, semantic, epistemic, dialogical, and gradualistic demands*. Specifying the precise nature of these demands—especially the logical, semantic, and epistemic demands—is a difficult and highly contested matter. However, for present purposes, it is sufficient to observe that some critics resist the attempt to build these demands into a definition of analytic philosophy as such, or challenge them on more fundamental philosophical grounds. Thus, Glock has commented on the logical demand (that analytic philosophy *conceived as argumentative discipline* must obviously satisfy) in the following fashion:

[W]hat I call the *rationalist* conception of analytic philosophy ... holds that analytic philosophers are marked out by their rational approach to the subject, by their attempt to solve philosophical issues through argument ... The rationalist conception has the advantage of allowing for the fact that analytic philosophy is a very broad church indeed. Nevertheless, it ... is not

16 S.P. Schwartz, *A Brief History of Analytic Philosophy: From Russell to Rawls* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 3.

in keeping with the commonly recognized extension of “analytic philosophy” [including, e.g., Hegel and excluding, e.g., Wittgenstein].<sup>17</sup>

However, the fact that certain members of *AP* appear to reject *ap*<sup>2ii</sup> on this score, while other non-members of *AP* appear to support it, merely indicates a certain tension between *AP* and *ap*. I will return to this relationship shortly.

Of the semantic demand (or the notion that analytic philosophy aims to achieve clarity), Glock states:

[T]he most common stylistic definition [of analytic philosophy] latches on to a [certain] matter of style—clarity ... Unfortunately, the speech of many contemporary analytic philosophers [e.g., Colin McGinn] is as plain as a baroque church and as clear as mud ... Even in the olden days there were notable exceptions [e.g., Wittgenstein, Russell, Elizabeth Anscombe, Wilfrid Sellars] ... [Therefore,] whatever distinguishes analytic philosophy ... it is neither the pursuit nor the attainment of clarity.<sup>18</sup>

Once again, however, the fact that certain members of *AP* appear to reject *ap*<sup>2ii</sup> on this score merely indicates a certain tension between *AP* and *ap*. Or, perhaps we could say that the failure of certain Analytic Philosophers to satisfy—or, ironically, to clarify—semantic (and also logical) demands in practice does not mean that these demands should be excluded from our positive conception of analytic procedure (that is, *ap*<sup>2ii</sup>).

Preston takes fundamental issue with the epistemic demand, rather than attempting to exclude it from the definition of *ap* (or, to be precise, *ap*<sup>2ii</sup>). His problem with the epistemic demand (itself partially understood by Preston as the demand that analytic philosophy contribute to knowledge, rather than understanding or even “wisdom”<sup>19</sup>) is that it yields a partial conception of philosophy, one that is at odds with a traditional conception according to which philosophy is *practically* rather than (merely) epistemically or theoretically demanding:

17 Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 174–175.

18 Ibid., 168, 171–173.

19 In support of this understanding, Preston cites a passage in which Soames states “in general, philosophy done in the analytic tradition aims at truth and knowledge, as opposed to moral or spiritual improvement ... the goal of analytic philosophy is to discover what is true, not to provide a useful recipe for living one’s life” (*Analytic Philosophy*, xiv).

... the traditional *telos* of philosophy is ethical and practical, not theoretical [though] the traditional view [does make] philosophical theorizing partially constitutive of *eudaimonia*, and also insists that the possession of at least some theoretical understanding is necessary for guiding oneself and others into the life of *eudaimonia*.<sup>20</sup>

Now, one might seek to defend either the traditional or the analytic conception of the proper goal of philosophy. But the mere fact that analytic philosophy does not share the goal of traditional philosophy is no argument against the former or for the latter (unless one identifies “traditional philosophy” with “good philosophy,” which was precisely the identification that analytic philosophers called into question). There *are* different conceptions of philosophy. Perhaps one such conception is the “right” one. Perhaps a plurality of conceptions can be upheld and even integrated somehow. These are open questions.

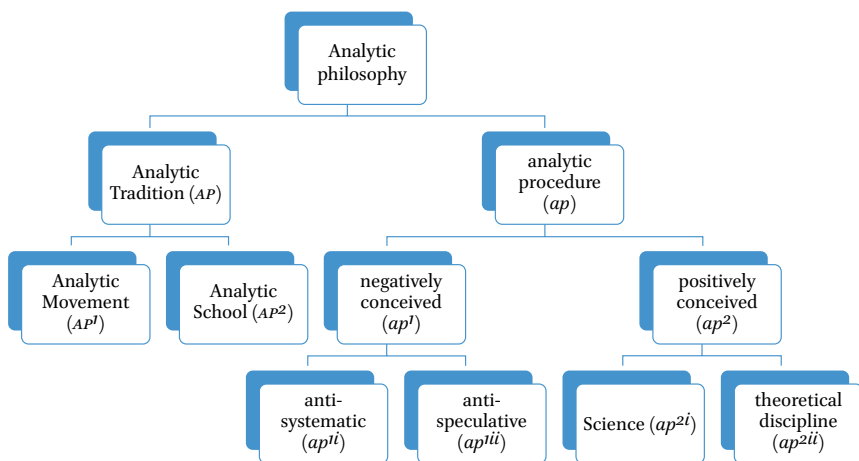


FIGURE 1 Outline of analytic philosophy.

Having distinguished a number of analytic philosophies (or senses of “analytic philosophy”) above, the question of the relationship between these philosophies inevitably arises. From the *general philosophical* point of view, the most significant relationship is that between *AP* and *ap*, between the Analytic Tradition and the analytic procedure. This relationship can be described as one of broad consistency but non-identity in virtue of (a) the anteriority of

20 Ibid., 11.



*ap*, (b) the special if non-unique emphasis on *ap* within *AP*, and (c) the original contribution made by *AP*. Thus, I suggest that: (a) the analytic procedure predates the Analytic tradition (by many centuries, in fact); (b) Analytic Philosophers exhibit a heightened consciousness of the analytic procedure (at least within their own historical context); and (c) Analytic Philosophers refined the toolkit of analytic philosophy (above all, by advances made in the field of formal logic). With respect to the last, substantive distinction, Avrum Stroll writes:

The creation of symbolic (or mathematical) logic is perhaps the single most important development in the [twentieth] century ... Though there are anticipations of this kind of logic among the Stoics, its modern forms are without exact parallel in Western thought. It quickly became apparent that an achievement of this order could not easily be ignored, and no matter how diverse their concerns nearly all analytic philosophers have acknowledged its importance.<sup>21</sup>

From the *historical* point of view, the most significant relationship is that between *AP'* and *AP<sup>2</sup>*, between the Analytic Movement and the Analytic School. With respect to this relationship, we may assert (a) the anteriority of *AP'*, (b) the (aforementioned) institutionalization of *AP'* in the form of *AP<sup>2</sup>*, and (c) the relative orthodoxy of *AP<sup>2</sup>*. Thus, I suggest that: (a) the Analytic Movement predates the Analytic School (by a debatable number of decades); (b) the Analytic School represents the professionalization or bureaucratization of elements of the Analytic Movement; and (c) the Analytic School lacks the revolutionary impetus of the Analytic Movement. Georg Henrik von Wright notes the last distinction (which is intimately connected to the second distinction):

[Analytic Philosophy] has lost its former revolutionary ethos. It is no longer a philosophy fighting prejudice and superstition—as logical positivism once saw itself doing. It has, to some extent, itself become an idol, enthroned in self-satisfaction and thus inviting new iconoclasts.<sup>22</sup>

The most significant relationship from the *theoretical* point of view, finally, is that between *ap'* and *ap<sup>2</sup>*, between analytic philosophy negatively conceived

21 A. Stroll, *Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 9.

22 G.H. von Wright, "Analytic Philosophy: A Historico-Critical Study," in *The Tree of Knowledge and Other Essays* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 41–42.

and analytic philosophy positively conceived. With respect to this relationship, we may assert (a) the anteriority of  $ap^1$ , (b) the independence of  $ap^1$  from  $ap^2$ , and (c) the independence of  $ap^2$  from  $ap^1$ . Thus, I suggest that: (a) the negative conception of analytic philosophy predates the positive conception (that is, the analytic repudiation of traditional procedure ( $ap^i$ ) predates the constructive development of analytic procedure ( $ap^{2ii}$ )); (b) the negative conception of analytic philosophy does not entail the positive conception of analytic philosophy (though it often results in such a conception as a matter of fact); and (c) the positive conception of analytic philosophy does not entail the negative conception of analytic philosophy (though it often results from such a conception as a matter of fact). Of point (a) above, Glock observes that:

[I]t was *traditional* philosophy that provided the point of departure as well as the acknowledged antipode to analytic philosophy ... analytic philosophy owes its birth to a break with the past, a past which it tended to view as uniform and predominantly misguided.<sup>23</sup>

### The Analytic Tradition and Anarchism

Having explained what might be meant by “analytic philosophy”—that is, either an intellectual tradition (Analytic Philosophy) or a theoretical procedure (analytic philosophy)—I now turn to the main issue of this chapter: the relationship between the political theory of anarchism (as opposed to the political movement of Anarchism) and analytic philosophy as such. In the first place, then, the relationship between anarchism and Analytic Philosophy calls for elucidation. As a matter of historical fact, there is arguably no such relationship to elucidate; at least, none of a constructive nature. Analytic Philosophy, as many of its critics maintain, is a politically conservative philosophy.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the only relationship in which anarchism, as a politically radical philosophy, could stand to Analytic Philosophy is a critical or oppositional relationship.

23 Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 85, 87.

24 This contrasts with (though it does not necessarily contradict) the charge [see, for example, M. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)] that the established field of Analytic Political Philosophy is biased towards liberalism. This bias is even argued to be built into analytic procedure. Certain aspects of this charge will be taken up (indirectly) in the final section. But I simply suggest for now that it rests (at best) on confusion of contingent features of Analytic Political Philosophy and necessary features of analytic political philosophy.

But is this so? Is Analytic Philosophy politically conservative? And what does this criticism (as offered by would-be radicals) involve?

There are at least four possible interpretations of the conservative criticism. The first is that Analytic Philosophy is conservative (or *effectively* conservative) in the sense that it is apolitical or indifferent to political concerns. The second interpretation is that Analytic Philosophy is conservative (or *Conservative*) in the sense that, far from being apolitical, it is right-wing in ideological orientation. The third interpretation is that Analytic Philosophy is conservative (or *relatively* conservative) in the sense that, if it is radical at all, it is not radical enough (from the anarchist perspective, above all). And the fourth interpretation is that Analytic Philosophy is conservative (or *philosophically* conservative) in the sense that, if politically radical at all or even politically radical enough, it is coincidentally so and not so for philosophical reasons properly speaking.

How to respond to the conservative criticism of Analytic Philosophy in these four forms? The first form of the criticism might have had some validity in a specific historical context, a context in which practical philosophy (chiefly ethics but also political philosophy, the philosophy of law, and so on) was eschewed by Analytic Philosophers. Characterizing Analytic Philosophy in what might be considered its golden age in the Anglo-Saxon world, Glock states that “during the 1950s, most of the leading analytic philosophers”—Ryle, Austin, Strawson, Carnap, Reichenbach, Hempel, Quine, and Goodman—“shunned ethics [as a whole] in favor of logic, epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind.”<sup>25</sup> Of course, prior to this supposed golden age, matters were somewhat different, as any consideration of the Vienna Circle, the pioneering work of Moore and Russell, and even the work of earlier philosophers like Bolzano and Brentano may confirm. But certainly Analytic Philosophy altered significantly as it emerged from this golden age.

In the following decades, H.L.A. Hart established the field of Analytic Jurisprudence in Britain in a manner that encouraged similar developments in political philosophy, notably those of Brian Barry in Britain itself. Across the Atlantic, John Rawls made even greater strides in establishing Analytic Political Philosophy, with a particular emphasis on justice theory as what was then, and remains, the dominant line of Analytic inquiry. However, alongside Rawls, in approximately the same period, Robert Paul Wolff established legitimacy theory as an alternative line of Analytic inquiry, one which is still pursued by numerous Analytic Philosophers, including many of those who refer to

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25 Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 180.

themselves as “anarchists.” Thus, the notion that Analytic Philosophy is conservative in the apolitical sense is manifestly false. As Glock writes:

The idea that analytic philosophy is characterized by the exclusion of moral philosophy and political theory [is to] be dismissed ... analytic philosophy cannot be understood as a movement that tends to exclude practical philosophy.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the implication of this form of the conservative criticism is that Analytic Philosophers *do not do enough* about their politics. But it is difficult to see how this criticism (if it ever carries any weight as a criticism of philosophy or philosophers) is specific to Analytic Philosophy.

The second form of the conservative criticism—that Analytic Philosophy is Conservative or right-wing in ideological orientation—is perhaps the most prominent form. It is, however, easily dismissed by reference to a historical record that critics tend to ignore. Quoting Glock once again:

[A]nalytic philosophy is sometimes accused even of lending succor to exploitation and suppression. By contrast, continental philosophy is often regarded as inherently political and progressive, not just by practitioners but also by members of the educated public ... Nevertheless, at least *prima facie* the idea the idea that analytic philosophy is apolitical or conservative, let alone reactionary or authoritarian, is flabbergasting.<sup>27</sup>

How to assess the historical record here? One might, rather superficially, consult the Analytic canon (assuming that such a thing can be said to exist) for evidence of political (“non-conservative”) and radical (“non-Conservative”) inquiry. Indications of who belongs to this canon can be found in various compendia and histories of Analytic Philosophy. To take just one example from each category, a list of 62 names can be compiled from the influential Blackwell *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* and Stephen P. Schwartz’s recent *A Brief History of Analytic Philosophy*. These names are as follows:

Frege, Russell, Moore, Broad, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Popper, Ryle, Tarski, Church, Gödel, Ramsey, Hempel, Goodman, Hart, Stevenson, Quine, Ayer, Austin, Malcolm, Sellars, Grice, von Wright, Chisholm, Davidson,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 182–183.

Anscombe, Hare, Strawson, Foot, Barcan Marcus, Rawls, Kuhn, Dummett, Putnam, Armstrong, Chomsky, Rorty, Searle, Fodor, Kripke, and Lewis<sup>28</sup> + Neurath, Schlick, Reichenbach, Black, Turing, Smart, Cavell, Donnellan, Plantinga, Kim, Nagel, Nozick, Stalnaker, and Singer<sup>29</sup> + Montague, Kaplan, Wright, Williamson, Dennett, Sider, and Nussbaum.<sup>30</sup>

Arguably, 20 of these 62 Analytic Philosophers (32%) engaged in political (“non-conservative”) inquiry. (Namely: Russell, Neurath, Carnap, Popper, Hart, Quine, Ayer, von Wright, Anscombe, Hare, Rawls, Dummett, Putnam, Chomsky, Rorty, Searle, Nagel, Nozick, Singer, and Nussbaum.) Arguably, 7 of them (11% of the total and 35% of the politically-minded) engaged in radical (“non-Conservative”) inquiry. (Namely: Russell, Neurath, Carnap, Popper, Ayer, Chomsky, and Nozick.) Thus, there would appear to be strong evidence for the non-conservative nature of Analytic Philosophy. There would also appear to be weaker evidence for its non-Conservative nature. Indeed, one might argue that only Frege and Quine among the 62 Analytic Philosophers (3%) were really right-wing in ideological orientation. Frege did not demonstrate this orientation in any of his philosophical work (thus he is excluded from the list of 20 politically-minded Analytic Philosophers); Quine only demonstrated it in less significant works (thus he is a borderline inclusion in the list of 20 politically-minded Analytic Philosophers).

The third form of the conservative criticism—that Analytic Philosophy, if radical at all, is not radical enough (at least from an anarchist perspective)—is the most relevant to our discussion in this chapter. Have there been any Analytic Philosophers who were radical enough (from this perspective)? Have there been any anarchist Analytic Philosophers? The answer to this question is yes. There have certainly been Analytic Philosophers who have classified themselves as anarchists, often as “philosophical anarchists.” These include non-canonical Analytic Philosophers like Robert Paul Wolff and A. John Simmons. Certain Anarchists dispute this political classification, but in

28 See A.P. Martinich and D. Sosa, eds., *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), v–vii.

29 See Schwartz, *A Brief History of Analytic Philosophy*, 6–7. Schwartz’s list of “Leading Analytic Philosophers” adds these 14 names to the list of Martinich and Sosa, but he also subtracts six names (Broad, Church, Ramsey, Hart, von Wright, and Fodor) from their list. Schwartz notes that he includes Frege, Gödel, Tarski, Turing, and Chomsky because of their influence, though he does not believe that they are really Analytic Philosophers.

30 See *ibid.*, 299–324. Schwartz adds these seven names to his original list of “Leading Analytic Philosophers” in the Epilogue to his book. He also includes Fodor once again from the earlier list of Martinich and Sosa.

doing so *may* confuse anarchism as an ideal phenomenon or political theory with Anarchism as a real phenomenon or political movement. In my terms, it is possible to be an anarchist (a political theorist of the relevant kind) without being an Anarchist (a member of the relevant political movement) and vice versa. Of course, it is also possible to classify oneself as an anarchist (as an opponent of the state, for example) without being an anarchist (or a skeptic about authority); in other words, it is possible to classify one's theoretical commitments mistakenly. Assuming that the so-called "philosophical anarchists" are mistaken in this way, there is still at least one canonical Analytic Philosopher—namely, Noam Chomsky—who counts as an anarchist.<sup>31</sup>

However, certain Analytic Philosophers dispute this philosophical classification, denying that Chomsky really belongs to the tradition of Analytic Philosophy. Assuming that they are correct, it remains possible to point to non-canonical examples of Analytic Philosophers who embrace anarchism (such as Alan Carter and Mark Lance), as we will see below. But leaving Chomsky aside, one can still, if one is desperate enough, point to some scattered evidence for anarchist interests and even sympathies among canonical Analytic Philosophers. Bertrand Russell, for example, sympathized with anarchism, though he held that what he regarded as the social ideal of Anarchism was unrealizable under present social conditions:

[P]ure Anarchism, though it should be the ultimate ideal, to which society should continually approximate, is for the present impossible, and would not survive more than a year or two at most if it were adopted.<sup>32</sup>

A.J. Ayer was notably impressed by anarchism and associated ideas:

[The politics of small-scale, participatory collectivism ... seems to have attracted [Ayer]. He was impressed by Proudhon's anarchism, by the guild socialism defended by Russell in *The Principles of Social Reconstruction*, and also by the revolutionary socialism of the late nineteenth-century French theorist, Georges Sorel.<sup>33</sup>

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31 Notwithstanding occasional comments to the contrary, such as: "Let me just say I don't really regard myself as an anarchist thinker. I'm a derivative fellow traveler, let's say." See N. Chomsky, "The Relevance of Anarcho-Syndicalism" in *Chomsky on Anarchism*, ed. B. Pateman (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2006), 135.

32 B. Russell, *Proposed Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism, and Syndicalism* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1919), xi.

33 B. Rogers, *A.J. Ayer: A Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), 133.

Carnap appears to have been sympathetic to anarchism of a sophisticated Landauerian form:

[Karl] Bittel tended more to a libertarian socialism of the kind promoted by Gustav Landauer, whose book [*Call to Socialism*], Bittel wrote, “towers above the rest of the German socialist literature, from an intellectual point of view. At the same time, it is *the* book for *freideutscher* socialism: *against* Marxism, materialism, centralization, state socialism and for communal cooperative socialism in the spirit of brotherhood.” Carnap heavily underlined these words in emphatic agreement.<sup>34</sup>

Even Karl Popper—not widely known as a friend of anarchism or Anarchists—expressed a certain affinity for anarchism:

In a 1982 interview with Franz Kreuzer ... Popper even expressed some sympathy with anarchism, which he had dismissed in *The Open Society* ... It was, he said, an unrealizable ideal, but the closer we can get to it, the better off freedom is.<sup>35</sup>

Most familiarly, Robert Nozick at least considered anarchist ideas worthy of serious attention—though he understood these ideas in a partial, anti-statist way that is characteristic of many Analytical Philosophers, including so-called “philosophical anarchists”:

The fundamental question of political philosophy, one that precedes questions about how the state should be organized, is whether there should be any state at all. Why not have anarchy? Since anarchist theory, if tenable, undercuts the whole subject of *political* philosophy, it is appropriate to begin political philosophy with an examination of its major theoretical alternative. Those who consider anarchism not an unattractive doctrine will think it possible that political philosophy *ends* here as well.<sup>36</sup>

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34 A.W. Carus, *Carnap and Twentieth-Century Thought: Explication as Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 59.

35 M.H. Hacohen, *Karl Popper: The Formative Years, 1902–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 505, n. 210.

36 R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 4.

The fourth form of the conservative criticism—that Analytic Philosophy, if politically radical at all or even politically radical enough, is coincidentally so—has been nicely formulated by Glock:

Critical theorists are not alone in suspecting that the ethical reflections and political stances of analytic philosophers do not form an integral part of their philosophical endeavors. In pronouncing on matters moral and political, analytic philosophers appear to be moonlighting [politically] outside of their [philosophical] day-job.<sup>37</sup>

What grounds are there for the criticism in this form? Certainly, there appear to have been “moonlighting” radicals and even anarchists among canonical and non-canonical Analytic Philosophers. Analytic Philosophers who “just happen to be” radicals include members of the Vienna Circle such as Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, and Hans Hahn.<sup>38</sup> Analytic Philosophers who “just happen to be” anarchists include Chomsky and Mark Lance. However, there also appear to have been non-“moonlighting” radicals and even anarchists among canonical and non-canonical Analytic Philosophers. Analytic Philosophers who are philosophically as well as politically radical include members of the Marxist “September Group” such as G.A. Cohen, John Roemer, and Jon Elster. Analytic Philosophers who are philosophically as well as politically anarchist include Alan Carter as well as more contentious cases like Wolff and Simmons.

The claim that Analytic Philosophy is philosophically if not politically conservative is, therefore, simply false. Anarchism itself has a place, however minor, within the tradition of Analytic Philosophy. This is a point of potential historical interest, if nothing more. But even if anarchism had no place within this tradition, it would not follow that there was or should be no relationship between anarchism and analytic philosophy as such. Analytic philosophy understood as a theoretical procedure may still contribute meaningfully and fruitfully to anarchist theory. This is a suggestion that I explore now.

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37 Glock, *What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 185. Glock cites the examples of Russell, Dummett, and Chomsky (as “at least an associate of the analytic movement”) here.

38 Though the coincidental nature of their politics is debatable. Glock, for example, writes that “in the early days of logical positivism its left wing representatives actually drew a closer connection between their scientific philosophy and their moral and political convictions. They conceived of their scientific world-view as a vehicle not just of intellectual, but also of moral and social progress” (*What is Analytic Philosophy?*, 186–186).



## The Analytic Procedure and Anarchism

What is the relationship between anarchism and analytic philosophy? Or, to rephrase the question for this context, what might we expect of an analytic approach to anarchism? This depends on whether we have a negative ( $ap^i$ ) or positive ( $ap^2$ ) conception of this procedure or approach in mind. More precisely still, it depends on whether we have an anti-systematic ( $ap^{ii}$ ) or anti-speculative ( $ap^{iii}$ ) conception of this procedure or approach (negatively conceived) in mind; or whether we have a Scientific ( $ap^{2i}$ ) or disciplinary ( $ap^{2ii}$ ) conception of this procedure or approach (positively conceived) in mind.

Let us consider just two of these four precise possibilities for now, as they are perhaps the most instructive for the future development of anarchist theory. The first possibility concerns  $ap^{ii}$ . The second possibility concerns  $ap^{2ii}$ . I leave  $ap^{2i}$  out of subsequent consideration for reasons of personal antipathy (in other words, I do not believe that analytic philosophy should be thought of as part of, continuous with, or modeled on Science). I take  $ap^{iii}$  to be closely related to  $ap^{2ii}$  (to be the positive side of the same coin), so do not consider it in itself subsequently either.

What, then, might we expect of the anti-systematic ( $ap^{ii}$ ) approach to anarchism? For one thing, we might expect a constrained or modest sense of anarchism to emerge—a constrained or modest sense of what it is and what it can deliver theoretically. Anarchism, analytically understood, is not a philosophical system or theoretical worldview; it does not provide answers, let alone answers that fit neatly together, to all philosophical questions. Thus, the analytical anarchist would be opposed to the sentiment recently expressed by Randall Amster and echoed by John Clark in his Forward to the same book:

[A]narchism is more than merely a political theory: it is a sensibility, a way of being in the world, an ethos, a vision, a cosmology.<sup>39</sup>

It's an all-encompassing mode of thought and practice. It's a way of experiencing the world and living in the world, and specifically, a way of being together in the world and being-together with the world.<sup>40</sup>

From the analytic perspective, anarchism is a political theory or philosophy. It is not a metaphysics, cosmology, ecology, or spirituality. It is not even an ontology, philosophy of history, ethics, economics, or positive political program.

39 R. Amster, *Anarchism Today* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2012), xiv.

40 Ibid., x.

It is certainly not a systematic account of all these things. This is not to deny, of course, that anarchists subscribe to all manner of such things, or that they do so more or less defensibly or coherently. Nor is it to deny, incidentally, that there are dominant tendencies or more or less defensible tendencies of the relevant kind within the anarchist tradition of thought. It is, rather, to deny that the commitments in question are part or definitive of anarchism as such.

What might we expect of the disciplinary (*ap<sup>2ii</sup>*) approach to anarchism? We might expect, as a minimum, an intellectually demanding approach to anarchist theory. At the most general level, then, we would not expect anarchism to rest on persistent obscurities or lazy assumptions (even if these obscurities and assumptions seem clear or obvious to the initiated—who are, it should be recalled, a small minority). Thus, we would not expect statements of the following kind:

The “case for anarchy” has already been made exhaustively and to my own satisfaction in two centuries of anarchist literature ... It would be an unforgivable waste of trees to print yet another book arguing for the validity of anarchist ideas.<sup>41</sup>

To be more precise about the intellectual demands we might expect of an analytic engagement with analytic theory, we might expect it to satisfy—or, more realistically, to attempt to satisfy—the five demands enumerated above: logical; semantic; epistemic; dialogical; and gradualistic. In other words, an analytic anarchism would be one which aspires to: rigorous argumentation; the advancement of human knowledge, understanding, or “wisdom”; conceptual clarity; argumentative interaction; and cautious, piecemeal argumentation. Such an anarchism is not methodologically monistic or dogmatic. Contrary to a particular stereotype of analytic philosophy, there is no singular analytic method; there are, in fact, many such methods. But there is a particular, and contestable, sense of analytic procedure that I have attempted to articulate in this chapter. The value of this procedure for anarchist theory—of which there is already some historical evidence—is ultimately to be judged by its implementation.

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41 U. Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 6.

### An Alternative Account of Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy

In another discussion of the relationship between anarchism and analytic philosophy, Benjamin Franks is highly critical of analytic philosophy and its contribution to anarchist theory.<sup>42</sup> However, I believe that his criticisms of both analytic philosophy in general and analytic anarchism in particular are largely misplaced. Indeed, his criticisms are immediately handicapped by a lack of clarity about what he understands by “analytic philosophy.” I will briefly consider (1) his understanding of “analytic philosophy,” (2) his critique of analytic philosophy, and (3) his critique of analytic anarchism.

At times, Franks appears to identify “analytic philosophy”—including “analytic political philosophy”—with *ap*. Thus, he claims that “Analytic political philosophy is distinguished by its methodology.”<sup>43</sup> By “methodology” or “technique”<sup>44</sup> or “approach”<sup>45</sup> he seems to mean roughly what I mean by “procedure,” though he also writes misleadingly as if there were a singular analytic “method”—that of logical analysis, to be precise.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Franks appears to identify “analytic philosophy” here with *ap*<sup>2</sup> or even *ap*<sup>2ii</sup>. (However, he does relate *ap*<sup>2ii</sup> to *ap*<sup>2i</sup>, asserting that analytic procedure is “modeled on natural science.”<sup>47</sup>) Franks therefore excludes *ap*<sup>1</sup> from his procedural account of analytic philosophy, thereby overlooking the extent to which analytic philosophy represents a revolutionary break from other conceptions of philosophical procedure. Such a partial identification, even on the procedural side, enables him to present analytic philosophy as mere procedural orthodoxy.

At other times, Franks appears to identify “analytic philosophy” with *AP*. Thus, he claims that “It is important to note that what constitutes the analytic tradition is itself disputed. It is certainly more diverse than some commentators would acknowledge.”<sup>48</sup> It is so diverse that it generated many of the (Wittgensteinian if not Quinean and Austinian) criticisms that Franks levels at “analytic philosophy.” Thus, it would appear to be a far more self-critical tradition than many suppose. In fact, Franks appears to identify “analytic

42 B. Franks, “Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy” in *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, ed. R. Kinna (London: Continuum, 2012), 50–71. See also B. Franks, “Between Anarchism and Marxism: The Beginnings and Ends of the Schism,” *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 17, no. 2 (2012): 207–227.

43 Ibid., 53.

44 Ibid., 52.

45 Ibid., 54.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 53.

48 Ibid., 52.

philosophy" here with  $AP^2$ . He therefore excludes  $AP^1$  from his historical account of analytic philosophy, thereby overlooking the extent to which analytic philosophy constituted a revolutionary movement against traditional philosophy. Such a partial identification, even on the historical side, enables him to present analytic philosophy as mere scholastic orthodoxy.

Bridging the gap between these two (procedural and historical) interpretations, Franks also appears to identify "analytic philosophy" with  $ap^{2ii}$  within  $AP^2$ . Thus, he claims that "Analytic philosophy is the major methodological current within Anglo-American philosophical institutions."<sup>49</sup> Franks may, then, ultimately operate with a *positive* procedural account of analytic philosophy *within the School*. As stated, the scholastic component of his understanding is partial, even from a narrowly historical perspective. Franks's historical understanding of "analytic philosophy" needs to be deschooled. But let us assume that the main target of his criticism is analytic procedure positively conceived ( $ap^2$ ) and so conceived as being subject to certain disciplinary demands ( $ap^{2ii}$ ). Do his criticisms of analytic philosophy (so understood) strike home? And do they undermine the analytic form of anarchism?

In terms of analytic procedure, Franks calls into question (a) its logical demands and (b) its semantic demands. In doing so, he conflates  $ap^{2ii}$  (what we take to be the target of his criticism) with  $AP^2$  by suggesting that these demands are mere "academic rules"—"dominant" academic rules at that.<sup>50</sup> But we shall ignore this unfortunate conflation. The attempted satisfaction of logical demands rests, according to Franks, on "a highly questionable account of human reason," and the attempted satisfaction of semantic demands involves a process of "discovering, clarifying, and classifying necessary and sufficient conditions (universal features)."<sup>51</sup> Analytic philosophy is therefore held by Franks to be an essentialist and universalist philosophy.

From the logical point of view, then, Franks contends that analytic philosophy involves "assessing the validity of arguments."<sup>52</sup> In this assessment procedure, "The status of a single, universal logic is invariably assumed ... rather than demonstrated. It is [however] mistaken to assume that core and pervasive logical propositions [such as the law of non-contradiction] are universal."<sup>53</sup> Now, there may or may not be a "single, universal logic," but analytic philosophers are not guilty of assuming that there is such a thing. Indeed, some analytic

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49 Ibid., 50.

50 Ibid., 64.

51 Ibid., 56.

52 Ibid., 53.

53 Ibid., 57.

philosophers defend logical pluralism, the view that there are many true logics.<sup>54</sup> Franks might well respond that, whether analytic philosophers recognize one true logic or many such logics, the analytic approach to argumentation is entirely formal and that it therefore neglects informal kinds of argumentation, such as “ordinary political argument.”<sup>55</sup> But this is untrue of much analytic philosophy, in which informal logic, argumentation theory, and critical thinking are taken very seriously.<sup>56</sup> So, whatever we can say of its conception of argumentation and its logical demands, analytic philosophy is complex and resistant to simplistic criticism on these matters.

From the semantic point of view, Franks states that analytic philosophy “operates on principles of *conceptual clarity* which, in turn, require definitional foundation.”<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, the analytic philosopher seeks to define terms and “fix” their meaning by the specification of “universal, decontested principles,” that is, “necessary and sufficient conditions.”<sup>58</sup> (At one point in his chapter, Franks admits the alternative specification of “a set of family resemblances of which [there must be] a sufficient number.”<sup>59</sup>) Franks argues that such meaning-fixing is impossible (if not undesirable) in the case of political terms, which are impermanent in meaning. Assuming that he is correct about the impossibility of specifying necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of political terms (and perhaps even the specification of a sufficient number of political family resemblances), there are still other analytic understandings of conceptual clarification with which Franks fails to engage. To take just one example, conceptual clarification might be associated with the (loosely Carnapian) procedure of explication, that is (in my own terminology), the non-arbitrary stipulation of seemingly necessary and other more contentious conditions for the application of terms.<sup>60</sup> The explication of the meaning

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54 See, for example, J.C. Beall and G. Restall, *Logical Pluralism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).

55 Franks, *Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy*, 58.

56 See, for example, R.H. Johnson, *The Rise of Informal Logic: Essays on Argumentation, Critical Thinking, Reasoning, and Politics* (Newport News, Va.: Vale Press, 1996).

57 Franks, *Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy*, 53.

58 *Ibid.*, 54.

59 *Ibid.*, 59.

60 I discuss explication further in my “Considérations méthodologiques sur la théorie anarchiste,” in *Philosophie de l'anarchie: Théories libertaires, pratiques quotidiennes et ontologie*, eds. J.-C. Angaut, D. Colson, and M. Pucciarelli (Lyon: Atelier de création libertaire, 2012), 327–353, as well as the Introduction to and Chapter 1 of my *Radicalism: A Philosophical Study* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

of political terms is arguably both conceptually possible and theoretically desirable. It is also consistent with analytic procedure or the analytic attempt to satisfy semantic demands.

We turn, finally, to Franks's criticism of analytic anarchism. By "analytic anarchism" here, I mean simply anarchism theorized by analytic means. As such, analytic anarchism is a species of philosophical anarchism. By "philosophical anarchism," I mean anarchism theorized by any analytic or non-analytic philosophical means.<sup>61</sup> My usage contrasts, therefore, with Carter's use of "analytic(al) anarchism"<sup>62</sup> and standard academic use of "philosophical anarchism,"<sup>63</sup> as well as Franks' synonymous sense of both (of "philosophical anarchism" and what he calls the "analytic account of anarchism"<sup>64</sup>). An analytic anarchism is not necessarily an anarchist counterpart to the "analytical Marxism" of G.A. Cohen and others; a philosophical anarchism is not necessarily an academic expression of "anti-statism"; and clearly a philosophical anarchism is not necessarily an analytic anarchism (since it could just as well be phenomenological or poststructuralist, for example).

What is wrong with analytic anarchism, according to Franks? Essentially, it constitutes "a serious misrepresentation of anarchism,"<sup>65</sup> of "the main principles of anarchist traditions"<sup>66</sup> or "actual anarchist theorists and movements."<sup>67</sup> Implicit here, perhaps, is something like my distinction between "Anarchism" and "anarchism"; and typically of Anarchist discourse, the former would appear to be prioritized in some way. In any event, Franks maintains that analytic anarchism misrepresents and undermines anarchism by representing it as the "rejection of the state" which follows from a "fundamental principle": "absolute sovereignty of the individual, based invariably on a Lockean or Kantian

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61 I explain this sense of "philosophical anarchism," and distinguish it from the standard academic sense (that Franks nevertheless associates with me), in "In Defence of Philosophical Anarchism," in *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, eds. B. Franks and M. Wilson (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 13–32.

62 See A. Carter, "Analytical Anarchism: Some Conceptual Foundations," *Political Theory* 28, no. 2 (2000): 230–253.

63 See, for example, A. John Simmons, "Philosophical Anarchism," in *For and Against the State: New Philosophical Readings*, eds. J.T. Sanders and J. Narveson (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 19–39.

64 Franks, *Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy*, 55.

65 Ibid., 51.

66 Ibid., 52.

67 Ibid., 64.

account of the self and negative rights.”<sup>68</sup> Franks imputes this argument to “philosophical anarchists” like Robert Paul Wolff and A. John Simmons (as well as myself, despite the fact that I categorically reject it).

Whatever the merits of the argument from autonomy—and Franks is rightly critical of it—it is a mistake to associate it so strongly, if not necessarily, with analytic procedure. (The strength of the association is tempered only by Franks’s acknowledgement in an endnote that there are analytic anarchists, including Carter and William Hocking, who argue from different principles. I might also be counted among such philosophers.) Furthermore, it is arguably a mistake to associate this argument with any kind of anarchism, unless one identifies “anarchism” with “anti-statism.” Franks evidently does not do so, since he cautions against the restriction of “anarchism to ... questions of political authority.”<sup>69</sup>

To sum up my objections to Franks’s criticisms of analytic philosophy and analytic anarchism: it is wrong to suppose that there is a singular and easily dismissible analytic method; it is also wrong to suppose that there is a singular and easily dismissible analytic argument for anarchism. There are many analytic methods (besides logical analysis), some more fruitful than others. And there are many analytic arguments for anarchism (besides arguments from autonomy), some more powerful than others. Nevertheless, from the perspective of anarchist theory, there is still considerable room for further analytic inquiry.

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68 Ibid., 55.

69 Ibid., 64.

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# Anarchism and Environmental Philosophy

Brian Morris

## Introduction

This chapter explores the connection between anarchism and environmental philosophy with foremost attention on the pioneer ecologist Murray Bookchin and his relation to the prominent stream of environmental thought known as deep ecology. The first section takes aim at conventional accounts of the origins of modern ecological thinking and the concomitant rise of the global environmental movement. According to such accounts, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962)—an eye-opening study of the adverse social and ecological effects of synthetic pesticides—laid the foundation for the emergence of an ecological movement in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> This was accompanied, it is further alleged, by the development of an “ecological worldview” founded on a robust critique of Cartesian metaphysics and articulated in the seminal writings of system theorists, deep ecologists, and eco-feminists. All of this, as I will argue, is quite mistaken. A critique of Cartesian mechanistic philosophy, along with its dualistic metaphysics and its anthropocentric ethos, already existed in the early nineteenth century. Darwin's evolutionary naturalism, in particular, completely undermined the Newtonian Cartesian mechanistic framework, replacing it with an *ecological* worldview that transcended both mechanistic materialism as well as all forms of religious mysticism. In combining the ecological sensibility of evolutionary naturalism with anarchism as an emerging political tradition, nineteenth-century anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus distinguished themselves as pioneering environmental thinkers nearly a century before Rachel Carson and Arne Naess appeared on the scene.

In the second section I discuss the life and work of Murray Bookchin, focusing specifically on his philosophy of social ecology and dialectical naturalism. I outline Bookchin's truly innovative studies of the ecological crisis, his critique of “environmentalism” (along with its anthropocentrism and technocratic reformist ethos), and his conception of nature as a complex evolutionary process. For Bookchin, as I will explain, nature consists of two distinct aspects that are dialectically interrelated, forming an essential continuity. Those two

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<sup>1</sup> V. Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993); F. Capra, *The Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997).

aspects Bookchin described, following Cicero, as “first nature”—i.e., the biophysical world and all its varied life-forms—and “second nature”—i.e., human social life and symbolic culture. I discuss at length Bookchin’s own conception of nature, which he contrasted with that of Marxism, liberal economic theory, and religious mysticism, and which he conceived as characterized by such inherent traits as fecundity, diversity, spontaneity, and subjective freedom. I conclude the section with a brief note on Bookchin’s radical politics.

The third and final section is devoted to a discussion of deep ecology, a major current of environmental philosophy that emerged during the 1970s and is associated specifically with the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. After briefly discussing the history and basic principles of deep ecology, both as a movement and as an ecological philosophy, I turn to Bookchin’s well-known and trenchant critique of the same—specifically his criticisms of its extreme biocentrism, its religious mysticism, its Neo-Malthusian tendencies, and the explicit misanthropy expressed by some prominent deep ecologists. I conclude the section by returning to Bookchin’s own social ecology and his emphasis on developing an ethical ecological sensibility of complementarity or mutualism that transcends the extremes of both anthropocentrism and biocentrism. At the end of the essay I discuss Bookchin’s relationship to a contrasting style of green anarchism—the anarcho-primitivism of John Zerzan—and re-affirm the importance of Bookchin’s legacy.

### An Ecological Worldview

During the 1970s academic philosophers became increasingly aware of the ecological crisis and began to turn their attention to the environment—the biophysical world that surrounds humans and of which humans are an integral part. This, of course, was something the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin had emphasized a century earlier. Drawing on the seminal insights of Charles Darwin and Karl Marx, Bakunin stressed that humans are not disembodied Cartesian egos divorced from nature and society, but social beings that are fundamentally a part of the natural environment; for him, there was no “ecological rift” between humanity and nature.<sup>2</sup>

Environmental philosophy in the 1970s tended to be identified with environmental ethics, and particularly with a current of philosophical thought that came to be known as deep ecology (although there were also important debates around such issues as animal liberation and the concept of a

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2 J.B. Foster, B. Clark, and R. York, *The Ecological Rift* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010).

land ethic<sup>3</sup>). The deep ecologists were acclaimed for developing a new vision of reality—an “ecological worldview”—that would replace the mechanistic worldview of Newton and Descartes.<sup>4</sup> What was lost on the deep ecologists was that critiques of Cartesian mechanistic philosophy go back more than a century. Indeed, Bakunin himself, a flamboyant “Bohemian vagrant” and political activist rather than a philosopher, was offering a vibrant critique of Cartesian philosophy in the 1870s, repudiating its mechanistic conception of Nature, its dualistic metaphysics, its ultra-rationalism, its anthropocentrism, and its false ontology of the human subject.<sup>5</sup>

In a later decade, the well-known anarchist geographers Élisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin substantially developed Bakunin’s evolutionary naturalism as an ecological philosophy long before the deep ecologists and environmental philosophers of the 1970s. In emphasizing the complex dialectical relationship between the natural and social dimensions of human life; in expressing an ecological sensibility that entailed an ethical and aesthetic (rather than economic and instrumental) attitude or “feeling” towards nature; in having a strong sense of community and what came to be known as “bioregional vision”; and, finally, in advocating a social ecology that combined a concern for social justice, rationality, and human solidarity with an equal concern for the integrity and flourishing of what they described as “first nature” (the natural world), both Reclus and Kropotkin long ago anticipated some of the key themes of contemporary ecological thinking.<sup>6</sup> It is of interest, therefore, that they are seldom considered philosophers of nature, let alone “key thinkers” on the environment.<sup>7</sup>

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- 3 See, for example, A. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* [1949] (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1953); P. Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals* [1975] (London: Cape, 1990); P. Hay, *A Companion to Environmental Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 26–71.
  - 4 Capra, *The Web of Life*, 3–13; C. Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (London: Routledge, 1992), 85.
  - 5 B. Morris, *Bakunin: The Philosophy of Freedom* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993); P. McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin: The Philosophical Basis of His Thought* (New York: Algora, 2002).
  - 6 M. Breitbart, “Peter Kropotkin: The Anarchist Geographer,” in *Geography, Ideology and Social Concern*, ed. D.R. Stoddart (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 134–153; K. Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1985); B. Morris, *Kropotkin: The Politics of Community* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2004), 113–170; J. Clark and C. Martin, eds., *Anarchy, Geography, Modernity: The Radical Social Thought of Élisée Reclus* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004), 19–35.
  - 7 G. Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), 156–183; D. Macauley, ed., *Minding Nature: The Philosophers of Ecology* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996); J. Palmer, ed., *Key Thinkers on the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Crucially, Reclus and Kropotkin not only formulated a distinctive philosophy of nature—evolutionary or dialectical naturalism—but also made the first attempts to combine an ecological sensibility with anarchism as a political tradition. It has to be recognized, of course, that the present ecological crisis has a long history and did not suddenly erupt in the 1960s. In fact, like feminism, the ecology movement that emerged in the 1960s was, in a sense, the “second-wave” of an on-going anti-systemic movement. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, a number of social movements arose, both political and literary, that expressed a fundamental critique of urban, industrial society—a society which, in response to the expansion of industrial capitalism, was accompanied by widespread pollution, squalor, disease, and the degradation of both natural and human environments. It comes as no surprise, accordingly, that an “early green politics”<sup>8</sup> already existed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Indeed, the environmental historian Richard Grove has suggested that the emergence of environmentalism and a concern for nature conservation, relating to such issues as soil erosion, deforestation and the depletion of wildlife and natural resources, can be seen as a direct response to the burgeoning colonialism of the era.<sup>9</sup>

The early concern with environmental issues and corresponding development of “ecological” approaches to nature manifested themselves in many different social movements and currents of thought by the end of the nineteenth century. Early socialists such as Robert Blatchford and Henry Salt attempted to combine a (libertarian) socialist emphasis on social justice and the class struggle with an ecological sensibility involving a respect for nature, particularly animals, and an ecological critique of capitalism. This same approach is evident in the “back to nature” or “back to the land” movement associated (in Britain, at least) with Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin, William Morris, and Edward Carpenter. Reclus and Kropotkin were closely associated with this eco-socialist movement as well.<sup>10</sup> A similar “back to nature” movement arose in the United States, with the emergence at the end of the nineteenth century of what has been described as the “Arcadian” ethic. This was expressed in the creation of national parks, the founding of the Audubon Society and similar organizations,

8 P.C. Gould, *Early Green Politics* (Brighton, U.K.: Harvester Press, 1988).

9 R. Grove, *Green Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

10 J. Marsh, *Back to the Land* (London: Quartet Books, 1982); Gould, *Early Green Politics*; R. Kinna, *William Morris: The Art of Socialism* (Cardiff, U.K.: University of Wales Press, 2000); B. Morris, *Richard Jefferies and the Ecological Vision* (Bloomington, In.: Trafford, 2006), 357–362; S. Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (London: Verso, 2008).

the introduction of nature study into the school curricula, the emergence of outdoor youth movements such as Ernest Thompson Seton's "Woodcraft Indians" (Seton was a disciple of Kropotkin), and, finally, the development of the wilderness novel as a literary form.<sup>11</sup>

Another driving force in the emergence of an ecological worldview and a conservation ethic at the end of the nineteenth century was the popular nature writings of many literary naturalists—writings generally ignored by historians of ecological thinking.<sup>12</sup> The key figures in emphasizing our "kinship with nature" and in completely undermining Cartesian philosophy and the Baconian "man against nature" ethic were Richard Jefferies and W.H. Hudson in Britain, and John Muir, Henry Thoreau, John Burroughs, and Ernest Thompson Seton in the United States. Their poetic naturalism had a profound impact on changing people's perceptions towards the natural world (especially animals) and their books were often best-sellers.<sup>13</sup> In this context it is also worth recalling those twentieth century philosophers and naturalists—all deeply influenced by Darwin—who were instrumental in either establishing ecology as a science, or in developing the new philosophical worldview of evolutionary naturalism. Here Ernest Haeckel, Arthur Tansley, Roy Wood Sellars, Charles Elton, John Dewey, William Morton Wheeler, Lewis Mumford, and Aldo Leopold may be mentioned among many others. To equate western philosophy, let alone western culture, with the mechanistic worldview and dualistic metaphysics of Cartesian philosophy, as do many deep ecologists, eco-feminists, and so-called "post" anarchists, is, to say the least, deeply misleading.

As Ernest Mayr and Hans Jonas long ago affirmed, it was Charles Darwin who initiated not only the development of the idea of ecology, but also of a new ecological worldview. After all, Darwin introduced the idea that humans are not the special products of God's creation but evolve according to principles that operate throughout the natural world. He also stressed the intrinsically *organic* (not spiritual) link between humans and nature, thus completely undermining—long before deep ecology, quantum physics and feminist philosophy—the mechanistic Cartesian world picture, along with its dualisms, its anthropocentric ethos, its cosmic teleology, and its essentialism. Darwin also emphasized the crucial importance of openness, chance and

11 P.J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); D. Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 114.

12 For example, Worster, *Nature's Economy*; P. Marshall, *Nature's Web: An Exploration of Ecological Thinking* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

13 B. Morris, *Ecology and Anarchism: Essays and Reviews on Contemporary Thought* (Malvern Wells, U.K.: Images, 1996), 33–35.

probability, and the agency and individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process. Darwin thus offered a way of understanding reality that was both naturalistic and historical—an evolutionary naturalism. It was this evolutionary paradigm that both Reclus and Kropotkin embraced at the end of the nineteenth century, as did the philosophers and naturalists cited above.<sup>14</sup> How odd it is, therefore, that so many environmental philosophers seem not to have heard of Darwin!<sup>15</sup>

Environmental philosophy has been described as constituting a “vast terrain” within the realm of contemporary thought, and certainly there is an absolute welter of literature on the subject, particularly with respect to environmental ethics.<sup>16</sup> To relate anarchism as a political tradition to this complex, tangled web of philosophical theorizing would be a rather daunting task to say the least. In this chapter, therefore, I will focus on the redoubtable scholar and pioneer ecologist Murray Bookchin and his relationship to deep ecology, which has long been and continues to be one of the most enduring, influential, and challenging philosophical currents within the “new environmentalism.”<sup>17</sup> Bookchin is important not only because he stands among the likes of Paul Goodman, Albert Meltzer, Colin Ward, Nicolas Walter, Noam Chomsky, and other key figures in the “renewal” of anarchism in the latter part of the twentieth century; he also played a significant role in developing the synthesis of social anarchism and ecology pioneered by Kropotkin and Reclus. As I will argue, Bookchin’s social ecology is a truly ecological worldview.

### The Social Ecology of Murray Bookchin

Murray Bookchin (1921–2006) was one of the founding figures of the twentieth-century ecology movement and remains one of the most well-known and controversial figures in both environmental philosophy and anarchist politics. Owing in large part to his harsh polemical critiques of both deep ecology and

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- 14 H. Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Worster, *Nature’s Economy*; E. Mayr, *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); B. Morris, *Anthropology and the Human Subject* (Bloomington, In.: Trafford, 2014), 41–65.
  - 15 Cf. A. Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 156–183; A. Light and H. Rolston, eds., *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).
  - 16 Hay, *A Companion to Environmental Thought*; Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*.
  - 17 Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*; A. Drengson and Y. Inoue, eds., *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology* (Berkeley, Calif.: North Atlantic Books, 1995).

what he described as life-style anarchism,<sup>18</sup> however, Bookchin has in recent decades tended to be ignored, reduced to a negative footnote, or dismissed entirely as an advocate of Cartesian science and anthropocentrism, especially by deep (spiritual) ecologists. Alternatively, he has been relentlessly caricatured as a misguided, arrogant, muddled, dogmatic “leftist” and “enraged autodidact” (no less!) who was completely inept at philosophical analysis.<sup>19</sup>

Some of Bookchin's tracts are indeed polemical and, it has to be admitted, unduly abrasive and scathing. But people often forget the scholarship behind Bookchin's work, the fact that his critiques have a political and not a personal intent and are always focused on specific issues. It is not the case, moreover, that Bookchin's diatribes were a symptom of old age—the rantings, as is often claimed, of a “grumpy old man”—as is made clear by his vitriolic but important and insightful early critique of Marxism “Listen, Marxist!”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Bookchin's more scholarly and substantive works are generally free of polemics. He was a leading radical activist and an important and influential radical scholar who, for over fifty years, produced a steady stream of essays, political tracts, and substantial books on environmental issues, the culture of cities, libertarian political movements, and social ecology that are truly impressive and groundbreaking. Throughout his life he was a libertarian socialist—a leftist and a revolutionary.

At the same time, he remained one of the only significant figures in the ecology movement not to succumb to religious mysticism, primitivism, surrealism, or postmodernism, and always stayed close to the empiricist tradition of the Enlightenment.

*The Ecology of Freedom*, which many have considered Bookchin's magnum opus, represents an original and coherent synthesis of radical ecology, social anarchism, and Hegelian Marxism.<sup>21</sup> The key influences on Bookchin's thought—which he was always quick to acknowledge explicitly<sup>22</sup>—include the organic dialectical philosophies of Aristotle, Diderot, Goethe, and Hegel;

18 M. Bookchin, “Social Ecology versus ‘Deep Ecology,’” *The Raven* 1, no. 3 (1987): 219–250; M. Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 1995).

19 For cogent responses to Bookchin's many critics, see M. Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993–1998* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 1999), 160–259; and A. Price, *Recovering Bookchin: Social Ecology and the Crises of Our Time* (Porsgrunn, Norway: New Compass Press, 2012), 37–64.

20 M. Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* [1971] (London: Wildwood House, 1974), 173–220.

21 M. Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom* [1982] (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991).

22 Bookchin, “Social Ecology versus ‘Deep Ecology,’” 246; J. Biehl, *Mumford, Gutkind, Bookchin: The Emergence of Eco-Decentralism* (Porsgrunn, Norway: New Compass Press, 2011); B. Morris, *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism* (Brighton, U.K.: Book Guild, 2012), 257.



the Marxist tradition, particularly as developed by the critical theorists Marcuse, Adorno, and Horkheimer, whom Bookchin valued for their critiques of logical positivism as well as the mysticism and theological obscurantism of Martin Heidegger; the social anarchist tradition stemming from Bakunin, especially the writings of Kropotkin on mutual aid; the revolutionary anarcho-feminist ideals of Louise Michel and Emma Goldman; and, finally, the social ecology of Lewis Mumford, René Dubos, and Erwin Gutkind. An impressive synthesis, indeed!

Born in New York City to Russian Jewish immigrants, Bookchin “was raised under the very shadow of the Russian revolution.”<sup>23</sup> From his earliest years he was engaged in radical politics and the neighborhood in which he lived was “passionately radical in one way or another.”<sup>24</sup> In his youth he became a member of the American Communist Party but later broke completely with Russian communism and joined a group of libertarian socialists associated with the German Trotskyist Josef Weber. After a stint of military service during the Second World War, Bookchin spent the next ten years of his life as an industrial worker and trade union activist. Given this background Bookchin (like myself!) was always skeptical of the pretensions, elitism, and obscurantism of academic philosophers. After reading Herbert Read in the late 1950s, Bookchin became a social anarchist and his polemical essay, *Listen, Marxist!*, first published in 1969, clearly marked his break with Marxism. He thus came to feel a close affinity with Kropotkin’s communitarian anarchism, regarding the Russian anarchist-geographer as the “real pioneer in the eco-anarchist tradition.”<sup>25</sup>

In 1964 Bookchin wrote a seminal essay on “Ecology and Revolutionary Thought.” Essentially a manifesto of radical ecology, it explicitly called for the demise of capitalism and the revolutionary transformation of society as the only real solution to the environmental crisis. In the essay Bookchin expressed a dialectical synthesis of social anarchism and radical ecology which he described, following Gutkind, as “social ecology.” In this way he linked a philosophy of nature (dialectical or evolutionary naturalism) with a philosophy of social revolution (social anarchism).<sup>26</sup> Bookchin, as he always acknowledged,

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23 J. Biehl, ed., *The Murray Bookchin Reader* (London: Cassell, 1997), 2.

24 Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left*, 18.

25 Ibid., 58.

26 Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 57–82.

thus stood firmly in the revolutionary eco-socialist tradition of Bakunin, Reclus, and Kropotkin.<sup>27</sup>

The year 1962, which marked the publication of Rachel Carson's classic study *Silent Spring*, has often been identified with the beginning of the ecology movement. Although Carson called for a more balanced ecological approach—one that could both manage insect pests as well as protect human beings and the environment—*Silent Spring* itself had a rather narrow focus, highlighting only the problematic nature of synthetic particles and their adverse social and ecological consequences. Much less well known is the fact that Bookchin, writing under the pseudonym Lewis Herber, published earlier that same year a much more substantial, trenchant, and wide-ranging survey of the ecological crisis (*Our Synthetic Environment*) that also explored the social roots of the ecological crisis and was infused with a radical vision. In the book, Bookchin provided a chapter by chapter outline of the key aspects of the ecological crisis, especially regarding its impact on human health and well-being. Of the many environmental issues discussed by Bookchin the following are worth noting: the widespread pollution of the atmosphere, as well as of rivers and waterways through unchecked industrial production; the limitations of industrial agriculture in light of the adverse effects of toxic pesticides and soil erosion; the serious depletion of bird life and other forms of wildlife; the problems of chemical additives in food with respect to human health; the serious decline in the quality of urban life through over-crowding, pollution, poverty, and traffic congestion; the inherent dangers of nuclear power; and, finally, that the burning of fossil fuels (coal and oil) had created a “blanket of carbon dioxide” that may well lead to destructive storm patterns and eventually to the melting of the ice cap. With remarkable prescience, Bookchin was calling attention to the threat of global warming long before Al Gore and George Monbiot.<sup>28</sup> The notion that Bookchin was only concerned with “urban pollution” and thus “missed” the ecological revolution of the 1960s<sup>29</sup> is, accordingly, quite facile, as is the claim that he was “not strikingly original.”<sup>30</sup>

27 On Bookchin's early life, see Biehl, *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, 2–6; Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left*, 15–58.

28 M. Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment* [1962] (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 60. For an illuminating essay, see also R. Krøvel, “Revisiting Social and Deep Ecology in the Light of Global Warming,” *Anarchist Studies* 21, no. 2 (2013): 22–47.

29 Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 303.

30 M.E. Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994), 151.

According to Bookchin, the main cause of the ecological crisis isn't overpopulation or an inherent human tendency toward destruction and parasitism but a capitalist system that in its very essence relies on exploitation, competition, and ruthless economic expansion. As Bookchin wrote:

[The environmental crisis] stems not merely from greed but from a market-oriented system in which everything is reduced to a commodity ... and in which every economic dynamic centers on capital accumulation. Hence the prevailing society is *inherently* anti-ecological.<sup>31</sup>

Recently, the spiritualist neo-Marxist Joel Kovel argues in what has been acclaimed as a highly original text that capitalism is the driving force behind the ecological crisis.<sup>32</sup> Surprisingly, he fails to acknowledge that Bookchin had fervently advocated this same thesis for over thirty years, repeatedly asserting that modern capitalism reduces "the entire planet ... to a factory and nature to mere 'resources' for reaping extravagant profits."<sup>33</sup>

For Bookchin, meeting the challenges of the environmental crisis implied neither a return to Neolithic technology nor the "mindless depreciation" of technology as such; rather it entailed the creation of an ecological society with a decentralized economy and a technology restored to human scale. As he concluded:

If we are to survive ecological catastrophe, we must decentralize, restore bioregional forms of production and food cultivation, diversify our technologies, scale them to human dimensions and establish face-to-face forms of democracy.<sup>34</sup>

Bookchin's lifelong vision was to steer a path between a technocratic approach to social life that conjoins technology to capitalism and concerns itself with profit rather than human need and the wholesale and "mindless" rejection of technology as advanced by eco-primitivists like David Watson and John Zerzan. Bookchin offered a reasoned critique of such technophobia,<sup>35</sup> even though he described himself as "practically a luddite."<sup>36</sup>

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31 Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment*, xxxiii. Emphasis in the original.

32 J. Kovel, *The Enemy of Nature* (London: Zed Books, 2002).

33 Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment*, xxxii.

34 M. Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980), 27.

35 Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left*, 173–186.

36 S. Chase, ed., *Defending the Earth* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 35.

By the term “ecology” Bookchin meant not simply a scientific discipline or a pragmatic technique, but rather a “broad, philosophical, almost spiritual, outlook towards humanity’s relationship with the natural world.”<sup>37</sup> Alongside such diverse twentieth-century thinkers as Edmund Husserl, Erich Fromm, and Lewis Mumford,<sup>38</sup> Bookchin emphasized that there is a paradoxical duality or essential contradiction at the heart of the human existence—an inherent *dialectic*. This duality is well expressed in the famous painting by Raphael which depicts Plato pointing to the heavens while Aristotle points to the earth.<sup>39</sup> On the one hand, humans are intrinsically a part of nature, the product of a natural evolutionary process. Bookchin found it deplorable, accordingly, that humans are conceived as “aliens” or “parasites” on earth by some deep ecologists and eco-phenomenologists. This implied, he argued, a “de-naturing of humanity” and denied the fact that humans are “rooted” in biology and evolutionary history.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, humans, in the course of our development as a unique species-being, have developed self-consciousness, sociality and symbolic culture, a potential for subjectivity and flexibility, and a “second nature” that has made our cultures rich in experience and knowledge. This has given humans technical foresight and the capacity to creatively re-fashion our environment.<sup>41</sup> As Bookchin wrote:

[Human beings] are of the biotic world as organism, mammals and primates, yet they are also apart from it as creatures that produce that vast array of cultural artifacts and associations that we call second nature.<sup>42</sup>

Bookchin was fond of describing the relationship between humans and (first) nature in terms of a concept derived from Hegel: that of a “unity in diversity.”<sup>43</sup>

To understand the natural world as an evolutionary process and the place of humans within the cosmos, Bookchin argued that we need to develop an organic way of thinking, one that was dialectical and process-oriented rather than instrumental, mechanistic, and analytical. Such a way of thinking avoids the extremes of both anthropocentrism—exemplified by a Cartesian metaphysics which radically separates humans from nature—and biocentrism—a

37 Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment*, xv.

38 Morris, *Anthropology and the Human Subject*, 112.

39 J. Lewis, *History of Philosophy* (London: English Universities Press, 1962), 50.

40 Bookchin, *Social Ecology and Communalism*, 27.

41 *Ibid.*, 24–27.

42 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xxix.

43 Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society*, 59.

naïve form of biological reductionism expressed by both mystical deep ecologists and sociobiologists.<sup>44</sup> (I will discuss Bookchin's critique of deep ecology in the next section.) Following a long tradition that goes back to the beginnings of western philosophy and was especially well expressed by the Roman scholar Cicero, Bookchin always made a clear distinction (but *not* a dichotomy) between "first nature," the biophysical realm of non-human nature that pre-existed the emergence of humans, and "second nature," the realm of human artifacts and of social and cultural life. Indeed, in his *Remaking Society* Bookchin, like René Dubos, quoted the well-known phrase from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* (On the Nature of the Gods): "by the use of our hands, we bring into being *within* the realm of nature a second nature for ourselves."<sup>45</sup>

It must be recognized that Bookchin, unlike many environmental philosophers, was not only a pioneer ecologist but also an *evolutionary* thinker. He would certainly have agreed with the naturalist Paul Shepard that evolutionary thinking gives us "relatedness, continuity with the past, common ground with other life-forms and a kind of celebration of diversity."<sup>46</sup> For Bookchin, the natural world (first nature) in which all humans are embedded, and the socio-cultural world of humans (second nature) thus constituted, are but two aspects of a single evolutionary process or continuum. As he wrote:

Human society, like animal and plant communities, is in large part a *product* of natural evolution—no less than beehives or anthills. It is the product, moreover, of the human species, a species that is no less [a] product of nature than whales, dolphins ... or the prokaryotic cell.<sup>47</sup>

Social life, therefore, "always has a naturalistic dimension however much society is pitted against nature in our thinking."<sup>48</sup>

In an important sense, Bookchin, like Mumford and Dubos, was an ecological humanist, offering a creative synthesis of humanism and naturalism. By humanism, of course, Bookchin meant a shift "in vision from the skies to the earth, from superstition to reason, from deities to people,"<sup>49</sup> thereby emphasizing the

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44 Bookchin, *Social Ecology and Communalism*, 27–28.

45 R. Dubos, *A God Within* (London: Sphere Books, 1973), 102; M. Bookchin, *Remaking Society* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989), 25.

46 P. Shepard, *The Others: How Animals Made Us Human* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996), 8.

47 Bookchin, "Social Ecology versus 'Deep Ecology,'" 227. Emphasis in the original.

48 Bookchin, *Remaking Society*, 26.

49 Bookchin, "Social Ecology versus 'Deep Ecology,'" 246.

agency and cultural creativity, both individual and collective, of human subjects. To equate humanism with Cartesian philosophy and anthropocentrism, as do many deep ecologists and postmodernists, was for Bookchin completely stultifying. Needless to say secular humanists from Ludwig Feuerbach to Lewis Mumford had long critiqued Cartesian metaphysics, emphasizing that humans are fundamentally “earthly beings.”<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to much social theory and ecological thought, Bookchin placed a focal emphasis on both natural *and* social evolution. As such he was not only opposed to dualistic theories that tended to radically bifurcate or separate the natural from the social aspects of human life (as in much sociological theory and the humanities) but also to all forms of reductionism, whether this implied the reduction of social life to biology (as in socio-biology and Neo-Malthusian doctrines) or the collapse of all distinctions—particularly the key distinction between humanity (or the self) and (first) nature—into a universal spiritual “oneness” (as with the mystical deep ecologists).<sup>51</sup> For Bookchin, accordingly, the relationship between the natural world (first nature) and human social life and culture (second nature) is, complex, developmental, and dialectical. To suggest that social ecology is a form of “reductionism,”<sup>52</sup> or that it implies a Cartesian anthropocentric approach to nature,<sup>53</sup> is to completely misunderstand Bookchin’s dialectical and libertarian ecology.

Bookchin drew an important distinction between environmentalism and social ecology. The former, he claimed, reflects an instrumental sensibility in which “nature is viewed merely as a passive habitat, an agglomeration of external objects and forces that must be made ‘serviceable’ for human use.”<sup>54</sup> Environmentalism implies a mechanistic and anthropocentric attitude towards nature, viewing it simply as a resource for human exploitation—an ethic founded on the technological mastery or domination of nature coupled with a technocratic rationality that never questioned the capitalist economic system.<sup>55</sup> Long before the likes of Caroline Merchant Bookchin was insisting that the very idea of “dominating first nature” had its historical origins in a

50 C. Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949); Morris, *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism*.

51 M. Bookchin, *The Modern Crisis* (Philadelphia: New Society Publications, 1986), 55; Morris, *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism*, 202.

52 D.F. White, *Bookchin: A Critical Appraisal* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 115.

53 Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 276.

54 Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society*, 77.

55 *Ibid.*, 58; Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, 21–22.

hierarchical society that entailed the “domination of humans by humans.”<sup>56</sup> The notion that Bookchin sees our relationship with the natural world as depending “completely upon human-human relations”<sup>57</sup> bespeaks contemporary deep (spiritual) ecologists’ total ignorance of Bookchin’s social ecology. Needless to say, Bookchin was never an advocate of reformist environmentalism, anthropocentrism, or what has been described as the “technocratic paradigm.”<sup>58</sup> To claim otherwise is to thoroughly misunderstand or willfully distort his dialectical philosophy of nature. This, of course, was always a common ploy among his critics, particularly mystical deep ecologists and eco-feminists.<sup>59</sup>

Bookchin stressed the importance of “thinking ecologically” and contrasted social ecology, as well as his own conception of nature, with Marxism, traditional economic theory, and mystical ecology, all of which he critiqued. Marxism, Bookchin argued, secularized the mystical image of nature as a “realm of necessity,” an intractable force that needed to be “subdued” by humans in order to engender a new realm of freedom. Marx, as interpreted by Bookchin, turned human history into a Promethean “heroic epic” in which the human domination of first nature through creative labor was the means whereby humanity attains the “good life” and brings about the end of class exploitation.<sup>60</sup> Though Bookchin repudiated the Marxist vision, he later insisted on a more positive interpretation of the Promethean myth as one that expresses human creative agency and not simply the technological mastery of nature.<sup>61</sup> Economic theory—the prevailing “market-place image” of nature, as Bookchin described it—portrayed nature as “stingy” or “cruel,” a realm of “scarce resources” involving endless “competitive” struggle and strife and complete recalcitrance with regard to human endeavors (hence the common depiction of economics as the dismal science). Drawing on Kropotkin’s studies of mutual aid and theories of symbiosis, Bookchin completely repudiated this image of nature.<sup>62</sup> Finally, Bookchin was also highly critical of all forms of nature mysticism, a way of thinking that conceive of the natural world either

56 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xxxi; Bookchin, *Social Ecology and Communalism*, 38.

57 P. Curry, *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 64.

58 A. Drengson, “Shifting Paradigms: From Technocrat to Planetary Person,” in Drengson and Inoue, *The Deep Ecology Movement*, 80.

59 M. Bookchin, *Which Way the Ecology Movement?* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 1994), 14; Morris, *Ecology and Anarchism*, 171–177; Morris, *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism*, 233–234.

60 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xxvii, but cf. J.B. Foster, *Marx’s Ecology* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 134–135.

61 Biehl, *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, 25.

62 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xxvii; Bookchin, *The Modern Crisis*, 55.

in relation to some divine being (as in pantheism or theism), or as the abode or iconic manifestation of a myriad of spiritual or mythical beings (as in polytheism or animism). This was one of Bookchin's key criticisms of the eclectic ideology of the deep ecologists and their uncritical embrace of religious mysticism. (Although the deep ecologists expressed an ecological *ethic*, they also tended to advocate a theological—as opposed to ecological—metaphysics.)

Bookchin's own conception of nature, as expressed in numerous contexts, centered on a number of key concepts, including holism (complexity), differentiation (diversity), freedom (subjectivity), fecundity (creativity), and participation (mutualism). In his own words:

First nature, conceived as a *development* process ... is extraordinarily fecund, marked by increasing wealth of differentiation, neural complexity, and the formation of diverse ecological niches ... Increasing subjectivity turns organisms into an *active* force in their own evolution, not merely passive objects of natural selection ... they exhibit a dim form of intentionality that we can properly associate with rudimentary forms of freedom.<sup>63</sup>

#### Natural phenomena constitute

a participatory realm of interactive life-forms, whose outstanding attributes are fecundity, creativity and directiveness, marked by a complementarity that renders the natural world the grounding for an ethics of freedom rather than domination ... Life is active, interactive, procreative, relational, and contextual ... Ever striving and always producing new life-forms, there is a sense in which life is self-directive in its own evolutionary development ...<sup>64</sup> The universe bears witness to a *developing*—not merely moving—substance, whose most dynamic and creative attribute is its increasing capacity for self-organization into increasingly complex forms.<sup>65</sup>

For Bookchin, the tendency of life towards greater “complexity of selfhood” through natural evolution constituted an immanent movement towards increasing differentiation, subjectivity, and self-awareness. He thus described the essence of life as involving “the potential for the development of self-conscious

63 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xxviii.

64 Bookchin, *The Modern Crisis*, 55–57. Emphasis in the original.

65 M. Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays in Dialectical Naturalism* [1990] (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1995), 59. Emphasis in the original.



organisms.”<sup>66</sup> As we noted earlier, however, Bookchin saw human subjectivity and human social life (second nature) as just as much a product and a part of the natural world as that of any other life-form. Because there is an essential dialectical continuity between (first) nature and human social life, Bookchin always insisted that humans are an intrinsic part of nature. To suggest that humans should never interfere with nature rightly struck Bookchin as “utterly obfuscating.”<sup>67</sup>

Drawing on the pioneering work of Peter Kropotkin and the writings of William Trager, Bookchin emphasized that the natural world is characterized more by mutual co-operation and symbiosis than by competition. Thus complementarity, mutualism, diversity, and wholeness are key notions of Bookchin’s social ecology. Because ethics is an eminently human creation, inasmuch as human beings can add a sense of meaning to first nature by virtue of their interpretive powers, it follows that humanity is the “very embodiment of value in nature as a whole.”<sup>68</sup> Bookchin goes on to advocate an “ethics of complementarity” which, he argued,

opposes any claim that human beings have a “right” to dominate first nature, assuming that they could do so in the first place, much less any claim that first nature has been “created” to serve human needs.<sup>69</sup>

In the epilogue to *The Ecology of Freedom* Bookchin concluded that nature

exhibits a self-evolving patterning, a “grain,” so to speak, that is implicitly ethical. Mutualism, freedom, and subjectivity are not strictly human values or concerns. They appear, however, germinally, in larger cosmic or organic processes that require no Aristotelian god to motivate them, no Hegelian spirit to vitalize them.<sup>70</sup>

Bookchin not only sought to promote an ethical naturalism consistent with ecological principles but also envisaged a decentralized anarcho-communist society that was based on intrinsic ethical principles such as mutualism, diversity, and subjective freedom. These principles, he clearly felt, were inherent in natural evolution. It is an extraordinary vision that one Neo-Marxist has

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66 Ibid., 128.

67 Ibid., 131.

68 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xxxvii.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., 365.

interpreted as “Messianic” even as he dismisses Bookchin as a vindictive and dogmatic Old Testament “prophet.”<sup>71</sup>

Given the focus of the present section on Bookchin's environmental philosophy, a full discussion of his radical politics is beyond its scope. Suffice it to say that Bookchin's politics were firmly situated in the anarcho-socialist tradition stemming from the Russian anarchists Bakunin and Kropotkin. Bookchin described his own politics of social ecology as “libertarian municipalism” or “communalism,” envisioning a society based on the key ecological principles of mutualism, participation, diversity, and subjective freedom, a decentralized and directly democratic society involving the self-management by local communities—whether city neighborhoods, towns, or villages—of their economic, social, and personal affairs. In contrast to anarcho-syndicalists, who placed a focal emphasis on worker control and self-management, Bookchin highlighted the importance of diverse local eco-communities and associations and, specifically, the creation of popular democratic assemblies linked by means of confederation. Bookchin contended that such local eco-communities and assemblies, when firmly established, would eventually replace the capitalist economy and the coercive nation-state.<sup>72</sup>

### Deep Ecology, Biocentrism, and Misanthropy

The term “deep ecology” was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in a 1973 article entitled “The Shallow and the Deep: Long-Range Ecology Movements.”<sup>73</sup> A keen and accomplished mountaineer, Naess had spent most of his life teaching philosophy in academia, his particular interests being semantics and the philosophy of science. In the 1930s he was closely associated with the logical positivists, a philosophy that stands in marked contrast with his later pantheistic mysticism. His writings, particularly *Ecology, Community and*

71 J. Kovel, “Negating Bookchin,” in *Social Ecology After Bookchin*, ed. A. Light (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), 25–57. For additional critical discussions of Bookchin's social ecology, see Marshall, *Nature's Web*, 423–429; Zimmerman, *Contesting Earth's Future*, 150–183; White, *Bookchin: A Critical Appraisal*, 101–126; Price, *Recovering Bookchin*, 65–132.

72 On Bookchin's political legacy and various critiques of libertarian municipalism, see J. Biehl, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 1998); J. Clark, “Municipal Dreams: A Social Ecological Critique of Bookchin's Politics,” in Light, *Social Ecology After Bookchin*, 137–191; White, *Bookchin: A Critical Appraisal*, 155–78; B. Morris, “The Political Legacy of Murray Bookchin,” *Anarchist Studies* 17, no. 1 (2009): 97–105; Price, *Recovering Bookchin*, 199–255.

73 Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 151–155.

*Lifestyle*,<sup>74</sup> have a decidedly mechanistic tenor, and his mode of presentation—abstract, normative, and geometric—is often obfuscating, exhibiting what can best be described as “quantitative mysticism.”<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Naess published important studies of Spinoza and Gandhi, and the influence of these two contrasting figures is clearly apparent in his later ecological writings, especially with regard to his concept of self-realization.<sup>76</sup>

In the aforesaid article—which has since been reprinted in several anthologies on the deep ecology movement<sup>77</sup>—Naess draws a distinction between shallow and deep ecology. Shallow ecology denotes the fight against pollution and resource depletion and is focused on reformist measures and on the “health and affluence” of people in so-called developed countries. Naess thus tended to conflate Western economic affluence with the reasonable concerns of people in Europe and North America for their health and ecological well being. Shallow ecology is virtually synonymous with what Bookchin described as “environmentalism.”<sup>78</sup>

Deep ecology, in contrast, is committed to an emphasis on diversity and symbiosis; biospherical egalitarianism; a fight against class exploitation as well as against pollution and resource depletion; a relational epistemology involving complexity and internal relations; and, finally, local autonomy and decentralization.<sup>79</sup> Apart from the explicit stress on “biospherical egalitarianism,” none of these principles, it may be noted, are novel or original (Bookchin rather caustically describes them as “old hat”<sup>80</sup>). Though he was critical of the extreme biocentrism of certain iterations of the concept of “biospherical egalitarianism,” Bookchin basically agreed with the notion that all forms of life have intrinsic value and the equal right to live and blossom. At the same time, he followed Naess’ own more moderate stance in suggesting that any “realistic praxis” that aimed at maintaining human life must necessitate some killing, exploitation, or suppression of other life-forms.

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74 Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*.

75 Morris, *Ecology and Anarchism*, 146.

76 On Naess’ life, personality, and influence, see G. Sessions, “Arne Naess and the Unity of Theory and Practice,” *The Trumpeter* 9, no. 2 (1992): 73–76.

77 For example, Drengson and Inoue, *The Deep Ecology Movement*; Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*.

78 M. Bookchin, *Re-enchanting Humanity* (London: Cassell, 1995), 88.

79 A. Naess, “The Shallow and the Deep: Long-Range Ecology Movements,” *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95–100; Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 151–155.

80 Bookchin, *Re-enchanting Humanity*, 88.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s Naess' ideas on "deep ecology" were enthusiastically embraced by many philosophers in the United States and Australia,<sup>81</sup> as well as by environmental activists such as Dave Foreman (a co-founder of Earth First!) and John Seed (who was at the forefront of grassroots efforts to protect the Australian rain forests). According to Warwick Fox's description, the deep ecology movement was largely comprised of philosophers, therapists, and "venerable teachers" who supported and promoted each other's work through the production of books and journals (e.g., *The Trumpeter*). Virtually all of the members of this "professional coterie"<sup>82</sup> had a strong interest in spiritual traditions;<sup>83</sup> like Gary Snyder (the "poet laureate of deep ecology") and Joanna Macy, many were practicing Buddhists.

Bill Devall and George Sessions' book *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*<sup>84</sup> encapsulated the deep ecology movement and did much to popularize the writings of Naess and the ideas of the movement generally. Dedicated to Arne Naess and Gary Snyder, both of whom were regarded by Sessions as the main inspirations of the deep ecology movement, the book describes deep ecology as a form of "ecological consciousness" which is invariably, and quite misleadingly, equated with a spiritual or theological worldview. According to Devall and Sessions, this ecological consciousness or ethic stands in sharp contrast with the dominant anthropocentric worldview of techno-industrial societies that regard humans "as isolated and fundamentally separate from the rest of nature, as superior to, and in charge of the rest of creation."<sup>85</sup> The origins of this perspective, it must be stressed, were traced not to the evolutionary naturalism (or ecological humanism) of such nineteenth century scholars as Darwin, Kropotkin, and Reclus, but from orthodox Christianity (especially as expressed by Augustine, Aquinas, and Descartes) and other Western religious traditions. The historian Lynn White, Jr. stresses this connection in a well-known and controversial essay entitled "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," arguing that there is an essential continuity between the Judaeo-Christian tradition and the ethos of industrial capitalism.<sup>86</sup>

81 Prominent eco-philosophers who became involved with the deep ecology movement include Michael Zimmerman, Neil Evernden, Alan Drengson, Warwick Fox, and Freya Matthews.

82 Bookchin, *Re-enchanting Humanity*, 91.

83 W. Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology* (Boston: Shambhala, 1990), 277; Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 177; Drengson and Inoue, *The Deep Ecology Movement*.

84 B. Devall and G. Sessions, eds, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985).

85 *Ibid.*, 65.

86 L. White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–1207.

Although Devall and Sessions identify the two key principles or “ultimate norms” of deep ecology as “biocentric equality” and “self-realization,” they also allude to a set of “basic principles” drawn up by Naess and Sessions in 1984 that constituted a kind of “manifesto” for the movement. These include:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on earth have intrinsic value in themselves, independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes...
2. Humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity (of life forms) except to satisfy vital needs....
3. The flourishing of human life and culture is compatible with a substantial decrease in human population. The flourishing of non-human life require such a decrease.<sup>87</sup>

As exemplars of deep ecology, Devall and Sessions offered a rather bizarre and motley collection of philosophical worldviews, religious traditions, and ecotopian visions, many of which involved quite incompatible cosmologies and ontological perspectives. These include the perennial philosophy of Aldous Huxley, a form of spiritual monism; the ecological sensibility and religious traditions of tribal peoples (animism); Eastern spiritual traditions, specifically Daoism and Buddhism; the Christian tradition of St Francis; the philosophies of Spinoza, Heidegger, and Whitehead; Gandhi's advocacy of Advaita Vedanta; and various American writers and poets—particularly those concerned with the preservation of the “wilderness”—such as John Muir, David Brower, and Robinson Jeffers.

Interestingly, Bookchin (along with Kropotkin) was initially lumped into the deep ecology fold owing to his advocacy of a decentralized form of politics and his emphasis on the development of an “ecological consciousness” that challenged the anthropocentrism of reformist environmentalism (i.e., shallow ecology).<sup>88</sup> Yet throughout the 1980s, and particularly while writing *The Ecology of Freedom*, Bookchin became increasingly troubled by the emergence within the environmental (as well as the feminist) movement of a form of “mystical ecology” that struck him as little more than a pieced-together collection of atavistic religious cults. Appearing under such terms as “mother goddess religion” and “Palaeolithic spirituality,” these forms of spiritual ecology clearly had affinities with the New Age romanticism that was then becoming fashionable in Western culture. Although Bookchin does not mention deep ecology in

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87 Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, 66–70.

88 Ibid., 2–3.

*The Ecology of Freedom*, he was appalled by the proliferation of misanthropic and racist statements made by deep ecology enthusiasts and, beginning in 1987, launched into a strident attack on the movement and its basic premises. The occasion was the first national gathering of American Greens in Amherst, Massachusetts, held in June that year, at which Bookchin was privileged to be a keynote speaker. A revised version of his address was published not long thereafter under the provocative title *Social Ecology Versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge for the Ecology Movement*.<sup>89</sup>

In this polemic Bookchin clearly recognized not two but three approaches or tendencies within the environmental movement. The first, discussed above, is the “environmentalism” of the eco-technocrats—the “modern acolytes,” as he described them, of scientism, who seek to dominate nature and treat the natural world simply as a resource (or commodity) for human use, specifically as a source of profit. As noted earlier, Bookchin was highly critical of this form of environmentalism, not least for its anthropocentrism and its radical bifurcation of humans and nature. The second approach is Bookchin’s own social ecology which, as noted earlier, draws its inspiration from such outstanding revolutionary thinkers as William Morris, Peter Kropotkin, and Paul Goodman. This approach identifies global capitalism, with “its vast hierarchical, sexist, class-ruled, statist apparatus and militaristic history,”<sup>90</sup> as the primary cause of the ecological crisis and the most serious threat to the “integrity” of life on earth.<sup>91</sup> Bookchin emphasized that social ecology advances a secular rather than a theological ecological worldview. As he argued repeatedly:

There is a need for a new sensibility, a new feeling of care and of love for all forms of life, a feeling of responsibility, a feeling of atonement with the natural world that we are destroying today. It’s terribly important that every environmental issue be examined in the light of its social causes. But I think, too, that this involves a spiritual revolution in our outlook towards each other and toward the natural world.<sup>92</sup>

Although Bookchin was not indifferent to spirituality—contrary to the claims of his critics—he interpreted the concept in terms of the *human* spirit and the empathy and aesthetic appreciation that humans express towards nature and

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89 Bookchin, “Social Ecology versus ‘Deep Ecology.’”

90 *Ibid.*, 221.

91 *Ibid.*, 219.

92 M. Bookchin, “Cities, Councils, and Confederations,” in *Turtle Talk: Voices for a Sustainable Future*, eds. C. Plant and J. Plant (Philadelphia: New Society Publications, 1990), 126.

other life-forms. The new spirituality that Bookchin repeatedly called for was naturalistic rather than supernatural (or spiritualist) in orientation.<sup>93</sup> Seeking to balance reason and technology with organic thinking, he clearly distinguished this kind of spirituality from the mysticism extolled by deep ecologists—the kind of theological metaphysics expressed by religious devotees, clerics, and mystics, with their conceptions of gods, deities, spirits, angels, and fairies, all of which, Bookchin contended, were simply outmoded products of the human imagination.<sup>94</sup>

The third approach that Bookchin discusses is deep ecology, which he harshly criticizes for its disorientating eclecticism; its extreme emphasis on biocentric equality, which invariably leads to misanthropy and anti-humanist sentiments; its embrace of spiritualism, which entails an ethic of redemption and gives primacy to faith, intuition, and ritual over and above reason and human agency; and, finally, its embrace of Neo-Malthusianism, which obscures the social origins of the ecological crisis and often leads to authoritarian politics—even fascism. (In doing so, Bookchin never accuses all deep ecologists of being anti-humanists, still less fascists; he simply notes extreme biocentrism devoid of any humanistic sensibility can easily lead to eco-fascism, as it did in Nazi Germany.<sup>95</sup>) Bookchin was especially troubled by deep ecology's tendency to advocate a new kind of "original sin" in which an undifferentiated "humanity" is seen as a destructive force that threatens the very survival of life on earth. This has the effect, he argued, of divorcing the ecological crisis and ecological problems from *social* life—specifically capitalist corporations, the bureaucratic state, or any other forms of social domination—and imputing them to a collective "humanity" that pollutes the environment, overpopulates the earth, devours natural resources, and destroys wilderness areas. As a biological species motivated by greed and a will to destroy (a "*Homo devastans*"), humans bear the chief responsibility for the ecological crisis. In this way, Bookchin argued, the deep ecologists tended to completely obscure the social roots of ecological problems.<sup>96</sup>

According to Bookchin, the deep ecologists' Neo-Malthusian tendencies and their uncritical emphasis on biocentrism led inevitably to anti-humanist sentiments. Indeed, what initially provoked Bookchin's critique of deep ecology

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93 Chase, *Defending the Earth*, 35.

94 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, xvi; Bookchin, *Which Way the Ecology Movement?*, 13.

95 Bookchin, *Which Way the Ecology Movement?*, 8. On the relationship between ecology and fascism see J. Biehl and P. Staudenmaier, *Eco-Fascism: Lessons from the German Experience* (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 1995); Hay, *A Companion to Environmental Thought*, 182–189.

96 Bookchin, *Remaking Society*, 9–10.

was the misanthropy and racism expressed by several prominent radical ecologists associated with the environmental periodical *Earth First!*, among them Edward Abbey, Dave Foreman, and Christopher Manes. All were devotees of deep ecology. In what is now a famous interview with Bill Devall, Foreman, for example, suggested that the best response to the Ethiopian famine would be to “just let nature seek its own balance, to let the people there just starve.”<sup>97</sup> Likewise Manes, writing under the pseudonym “Miss Ann Thropy,” advanced the obscene argument that AIDS should be welcomed as a suitable means of controlling the human population. Bookchin expressed despair at these and similar sentiments for their total disregard for human suffering; their simplistic understanding of the ecological crisis by resorting to “crude biologism”; and their extreme anti-humanism.<sup>98</sup>

Bookchin was not only critical of the ontological mysticism of deep ecology but also its emphasis on the norm of spiritual “self-realization.” As defined by Naess, self-realization is simply the recognition that humans are not only unique egos and social beings, but also natural beings, and thus an intrinsic part of nature—something that Darwin, Marx, Kropotkin, and Reclus had stressed long ago! Naess thus introduced a widened concept of the self—an “ecological self”—that “identifies” with other life-forms as well as with ecosystems and the planet as a whole.<sup>99</sup> As a movement of spiritual growth toward organic wholeness, self-realization entails the equation of the empirical self with the larger self.<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately deep ecologists like Naess never state what this larger Self (always in capitals) amounts to, noting only that it was known throughout the history of philosophy under such names as the “universal self,” “the absolute,” or the “*atman*.”<sup>101</sup> In the religious (or idealist) traditions from which these terms derive, however, the “self” is not associated with first nature at all; rather the “realization” of the “self” implies mystical union with God, the absolute, a world spirit (or soul), or, in the Vedanta tradition, Brahma.<sup>102</sup>

Bookchin was not opposed to the concept of “self-realization” as such (which he felt was intrinsic to all life-forms within nature and which had long

97 B. Devall, “A Spanner in the Works: Interview with Dave Foreman,” *Simply Living* 3, no. 2 (1987): 3–4.

98 Bookchin, “Social Ecology versus ‘Deep Ecology,’” 245; Bookchin, *Which Way the Ecology Movement?*, 6.

99 A. Naess, “Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World,” *The Trumpeter* 4 (1987): 35–42; Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 225–239.

100 Devall and Sessions, *Deep Ecology*, 67.

101 Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 85.

102 Morris, *Ecology and Anarchism*, 151.



been discussed by Western thinkers as a naturalistic concept) but rather to its mystification by the deep ecologists. This mystification implied the spiritual self-effacement of the human individual, the empirical self being spiritually “dissolved” into a “cosmic oneness,” thus denying the important distinction between humanity/the self and first nature. The “Self” of deep ecologists, Bookchin concluded, was essentially a vague, metaphysical category that reduces human uniqueness and rationality into a “deadening abstraction.”<sup>103</sup> Bookchin thus interpreted deep ecology—especially as advocated by Sessions, Devall, and Warwick Fox—as a religion of salvation with an ethic of spiritual redemption predicated on asceticism and personal retreat from the world into the self. As such it had little concern with, or interest in, social activism apart from the preservation of wilderness areas.<sup>104</sup> It is also noteworthy that while Naess advocated local autonomy and decentralization as one of the key principles of deep ecology, he also advocated the creation of global political institutions in order to counter increasing population pressure and to keep states and transnational companies in check. This was virtually the endorsement of a global state, the totalitarian implications of which are too ghastly to behold.<sup>105</sup>

Critical of both anthropocentrism—the theological notion that humans are the lords of creation and that all other life-forms are subordinates—and extreme biocentrism,<sup>106</sup> Bookchin advocated what he called an “ethics of complementarity.” This ethics implied a new ecological sensibility that “respects other forms of life for their own sake and responds actively in the form of creative, loving, and supportive symbiosis.”<sup>107</sup> An ethics of complementarity or mutualism, as championed by Bookchin, opposes any claim that humans have a right to “dominate” first nature—even assuming that this is in fact possible—still less that first nature had been “created” solely to serve human needs. In this way Bookchin placed a strong emphasis on promoting a rich diversity of life, one that enhanced spontaneity, heterogeneity, and fecundity (creativity) of both natural evolution and human social life, always insisting on the integrity of both (first) nature and the human life-world.

The notion that Bookchin viewed humanity as seeking to redeem nature from its “fallen” state, or that he (or humanity as a whole!) expressed a Faustian

103 Bookchin, “Social Ecology versus ‘Deep Ecology,’” 229.

104 Bookchin, *Which Way the Ecological Movement?*, 2.

105 Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 139. On the politics of deep ecology see G. Bradford, *How Deep is Deep Ecology?* (Hadley, Mass.: Times Change Press, 1989); Morris, *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism*, 230–235.

106 Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, 34–35; Bookchin, *Which Way the Ecological Movement?*, 3.

107 Chase, *Defending the Earth*, 34.

ambition to seize control of nature,<sup>108</sup> indicates a rather jaundiced if not willful misinterpretation, of what Bookchin's social ecology actually entailed. So, too, to suggest that Bookchin was a latter-day Teilhard de Chardin, (a Catholic mystic); an unrepentant Hegelian Marxist who showed "little sensitivity" towards the domination of humans over nature and thus expressed an "anthropocentric perspective"; or that his social ecology was akin to the New Age mysticism of Ken Wilber<sup>109</sup>—all these claims are misleading and woefully inaccurate. Even more bizarre is the idea that because Bookchin was a strong advocate of human reason and empirical science (not, it may be noted, Cartesian mechanistic rationalism or any form of positivism) he was therefore a fellow traveler of the neo-liberals and neo-conservatives, and hence a supporter of industrial capitalism.<sup>110</sup>

In concluding this section, it is worth noting that critiques of deep ecology have been advanced by many other environmental philosophers, including several eco-feminists and by "deep green theorists."<sup>111</sup> It must also be observed that by the close of the twentieth century many distinctive "schools" of radical ecology had come to be recognized alongside social ecology and deep ecology, including eco-feminism, various forms of spiritual ecology, bioregionalism, permaculture, eco-socialism (specifically related to the "greening" of Marxism), anarcho-primitivism, restoration ecology, and environmental pragmatism.<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

To conclude this chapter we discuss Bookchin's relationship to the other important strand of green anarchism, the anarcho-primitivism associated with John Zerzan, and briefly discuss Bookchin's legacy. In his *The Ecology of Freedom*, Bookchin devoted a chapter to what he termed "organic society," describing the socio-cultural life of tribal peoples. Drawing specifically on the writings of Paul Radin and Dorothy Lee, both sensitive scholars of North American cultures,

108 C. Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization* (Boston: Little Brown, 1990), 160–161.

109 Manes, *Green Rage*, 159; Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 14–16; Zimmerman, *Contesting the Earth's Future*, 151; Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, 268.

110 Curry, *Ecological Ethics*, 136–137.

111 A.K. Salleh, "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection," *Environmental Ethics* 6, no. 4 (1984): 340–345; R. Sylvan, "A Critique of Deep Ecology," *Radical Philosophy* 40/41 (1986): 2–12, 10–22; Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*.

112 Merchant, *Radical Ecology*; Hay, *A Companion to Environmental Thought*; C. Palmer, "An Overview of Environmental Ethics," in Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 15–37.

Bookchin noted several important features of early tribal societies, including a primordial equality and the absence of coercive and domineering values; a feeling of dialectical unity between the individual person and the kin group; the principle of “irreducible minimum”—a respect for the material needs of everyone in the community; a sense of communal property and an emphasis on mutual aid and usufruct rights; a relationship of reciprocal harmony and complementarity between humans and other life-forms, especially mammals; and finally, complementary gender relations in which work activities are often structured around women.

Bookchin urged that we draw lessons from the cultural lives of pre-literate peoples such as hunter-gatherers rather than romanticizing or emulating their lifestyles. Like Kropotkin, Bookchin was not unaware of the limitations of tribal life—e.g., parochialism, widespread and chronic feuding, lack of technics, comparatively short life-span, and, in some circumstances, an insensitivity towards non-human animals—and roundly rejected the notion that hunter-gatherers were the “original affluent society.”<sup>113</sup> It is thus hardly surprising that Bookchin was extremely critical of such eco-primitivists as John Zerzan<sup>114</sup> and David Watson,<sup>115</sup> who not only expressed technophobia but repudiated human civilization in its entirety. For Zerzan, in particular, the last eight thousand years of human history after the fall (agriculture) is seen as a period of tyranny and hierarchical control, a mechanized routine devoid of any spontaneity and sensual experience.<sup>116</sup> All those products of human imagination and creativity—farming, literacy, art, philosophy, technics, science, urban living, symbolic culture—are thus regarded by Zerzan in the most negative and monolithic fashion. Many writers besides Bookchin have criticized Zerzan’s eco-primitivism and his complete repudiation of human civilization for being misanthropic, fanciful, and hopelessly romantic, completely out of touch with contemporary realities regarding the human population on earth, and dismissive of the human potential for creativity and innovation.<sup>117</sup>

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113 Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left*, 186–189.

114 See, for example, J. Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal* (Seattle: Left Bank Books, 1988).

115 See, for example, D. Watson, *Beyond Bookchin* (Detroit: Fifth Estate, 1996).

116 For a sympathetic appraisal of Zerzan’s eco-primitivism, see D.D. Young, “Against Everything That Is,” in *The Best of Social Anarchism*, eds. H. Ehrlich and A.H.S. Boy (Tucson, Ariz: See Sharp Press, 2013), 221–251.

117 Bookchin, *Re-enchanting Humanity*, 120–147; Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left*, 186–198; Shephard, *The Others*; M. Albert, *Realizing Hope: Life Beyond Capitalism* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 178–184.

Like Bakunin and the early social anarchists, Bookchin always stressed that life, thought (reason), and language (symbolic culture) are *all* essential aspects of the human experience. Any attempts by intellectuals—whether positivists, sociobiologists, egoists, religious mystics, nihilistic postmodernists, or primitivists—to deny, downplay, or denigrate *any* of these aspects of human life was always stridently resisted by Bookchin. In fact, he devoted an entire text (*Re-enchanting Humanity*) to defending the human creative spirit against such anti-humanism.

As a left libertarian, Bookchin was, of course, equally aware and critical of the human civilization's "legacy of domination"—specifically its hierarchical social forms, class exploitation under capitalism, and bureaucratic state power. He thus expressed the need for a radical re-structuring of society in accordance with the "legacy of freedom" that had always existed throughout human history. Although continually berated by the deep ecologists for lacking any interest in environmental issues—specifically, a concern for the protection of wilderness areas—Bookchin was advocating nature conservation long before Naess. In drawing up the manifesto for "Ecology Action East" in the 1960s, Bookchin stressed the need to "guard and expand wilderness areas and domains for wildlife [and] to defend animal species from human depredation."<sup>118</sup> In his later dialogue with the deep ecologist Dave Foreman on "defending the earth," Bookchin reiterated that one of the essential aims of social ecology was to protect and expand wilderness areas.<sup>119</sup> What Bookchin critiqued was the tendency of deep ecologists to ignore social issues, to neglect the importance of agriculture and urban living, and, like many environmental philosophers, to equate nature with a pristine wilderness.

An interdisciplinary thinker in the vein of Lewis Mumford and René Dubos, Bookchin always insisted upon the need for *diversity*, and thus not only to preserve and expand wilderness areas (natural landscapes) but also to conserve nature and its wildlife in the countryside (cultural landscapes such as meadows, gardens, orchards, ancient coppiced woodlands, and cultivated fields) and in urban contexts (duly scaled to human needs and the well-being of both humans and other life-forms). Bookchin completely rejected the "garden of Eden" vision of a completely "domesticated" or "pacified" earth. The relationship that Bookchin sought between humans and (first) nature was not one of domination, but of reciprocal harmony and mutualism (co-operation).<sup>120</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Bookchin, *Toward an Ecological Society*, 44.

<sup>119</sup> Chase, *Defending the Earth*, 14.

<sup>120</sup> Chase, *Defending the Earth*, 14; Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, 24; Morris, *Pioneers of Ecological Humanism*, 235–238.

As an evolutionary naturalist, Bookchin sought to combine critical humanism with an ecological sensibility. He was critical of Cartesian metaphysics and all forms of religious mysticism and ultra-rationalism that sought to radically separate humans from the natural world and thus imply, as he put it, a “de-naturing of humanity.”<sup>121</sup> He often remarked that Western people had “forgotten” how to be organisms, and that we must therefore retrieve our “ecological identity.”<sup>122</sup> On the other hand, Bookchin was equally critical of those scholars—whether primitivists, sociobiologists, or deep ecologists—who expressed anti-humanist sentiments and thus downplayed or denigrated the creativity and social agency of the human subject. Long before the formation of many green political parties, which embodied the kind of reformism that Bookchin decried, he was affirming the need for both an ecological politics and a concern for social justice.

Although Bookchin has often been reduced to a footnote, or subjected to brief derisory comments in textbooks on environmental ethics,<sup>123</sup> his important legacy has not been completely forgotten.<sup>124</sup> Even among his radical critics within social ecology, however, the tendency has been to completely distort Bookchin’s ecological humanism, often in the most jaundiced fashion, or, like Kovel, to filch his clothes and then berate Bookchin for being naked!<sup>125</sup> In an era in which a triumphant corporate capitalism generates conditions of political turmoil, social dislocation, gross economic inequalities, and severe ecological problems (deforestation, global warming, widespread pollution, loss of biodiversity, and the general degradation of the natural environment) we surely need to take Bookchin’s legacy seriously—specifically his advocacy of a radical social ecology. It would be a great pity if Bookchin’s trenchant if occasionally cantankerous polemics led people to overlook his outstanding contributions to both anarchist theory and praxis as well as to environmental philosophy.

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121 Bookchin, *Social Ecology and Communalism*, 27.

122 Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, 265.

123 Curry, *Ecological Ethics*.

124 See A. Rudy and A. Light, “Social Ecology and Social Labor: A Consideration and Critique of Murray Bookchin,” in Macauley, *Minding Nature*, 318–342; Light, *Social Ecology After Bookchin*; Krøvel, “Revisiting Social and Deep Ecology.”

125 J. Biehl, “Minding Nature: The Philosophy of Ecology,” in Ehrlich and Boy, *The Best of Social Anarchism*, 265–280.

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## Anarchism and Psychoanalysis

*Saul Newman*

The psychology of the unconscious is the philosophy of revolution: i.e., this is what it is destined to become because it ferments insurrection within the psyche, and liberates individuality from the bonds of its own unconscious. It is destined to make us inwardly capable of freedom, destined to prepare the ground for the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Thus I have not the courage to rise up before my fellow-men as a prophet, and I bow to their reproach that I can offer them no consolation: for at bottom that is what they are all demanding—the wildest revolutionaries no less passionately than the most virtuous believers.<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

As the above two quotes suggest, anarchism and psychoanalysis have an ambiguous and somewhat paradoxical relationship. Otto Gross, the psychoanalyst and follower of Freud, declared himself an anarchist and celebrated the revolutionary potential of the unconscious, opening the way to a politically radical articulation of psychoanalytic theory that was taken up by thinkers such as Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse. On the other hand, Freud himself, and later on, Jacques Lacan, while not unsympathetic to ideas of emancipation and social progress, at the same time expressed a cautious skepticism about revolutionary politics, pointing to what they saw as its naïve utopianism. While one could say that both anarchism and psychoanalysis have as their ethical goal the greater autonomy of the individual, anarchists have criticized psychoanalysis—at least in its more traditional forms—as being *individualizing* and ultimately conservative, seeking to adjust the psyche to the pressures and constraints of a repressive society.

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1 Otto Gross, “Overcoming Cultural Crisis,” *Die Aktion* (Apr. 1913), reprinted in *Anarchism: a Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas. Vol. 1, From Anarchy to Anarchism* (300 CE to 1939), ed. R. Graham (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005), 281.

2 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* [1929], trans. and ed. J. Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1961), 92.

There is therefore something both impossible and inevitable about the relationship between psychoanalysis and anarchism. Without an understanding of the psyche, its irrational desires and its passionate attachments to authority figures, there can be no coherent theory of political action, let alone a successful revolution. At the same time, psychoanalytic theory poses fundamental questions to the very concept of revolution, highlighting the utopian fantasies and “wish fulfillment” embodied in such notions, and revealing the deeper problem of the inextricable link between revolutionary desire and the position of the Master. Yet, as suggested by the more radical exponents of the psychoanalytic tradition, there is indeed something potentially transformative and liberating—both individually and socio-politically—about psychoanalysis. And, if we can speak of a psychoanalytic anarchism, we can perhaps also speak of an anarchistic psychoanalysis. Yet, as I will show, this would involve a different way of thinking about anarchism, in which the desire for greater autonomy is coupled with an awareness of the pitfalls and dangers awaiting revolutionary projects.

In exploring this unavoidable encounter between anarchism and psychoanalysis, this chapter will mainly confine itself to a discussion of the (post) Freudian tradition, including Reich, Marcuse, and Lacan, as different as they are. While there are no doubt many non-Freudian forms of psychotherapy which might, superficially at least, have more in common with anarchist practices,<sup>3</sup> my contention is that it is the Freudian tradition, with its seemingly hierarchical architecture and discourse, that confronts anarchism with fundamental questions about our own relationship with power and authority. So, rather than this being a comprehensive survey of psychotherapeutic practices and their similarities with anarchism, this chapter will focus on specific areas of theoretical controversy in order to test anarchism at its limits.

### Voluntary Servitude and the Problem of Human Autonomy

Psychoanalysis and anarchism both have as their central concern the conflicting relationship between the individual and society. For Freud, the story of the individual's entry into society is also the story of his repression—first through the Oedipal dynamics of the family, and then at the hands of external institutions and laws. Thus, the individual chafes against the bars of civilization, a

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3 I have in mind here various forms of radical group and play psychotherapy, which grew out of the anti-psychiatry movement, in particular Somatherapy, which has a distinctly anarchist orientation. Even this, however, was based on the Freudian-inspired theories of Wilhelm Reich.

civilization which promised him comfort but brought him only unhappiness and guilt. Freud was keenly aware of the suffering this tension caused, and saw psychoanalytic treatment as a way of relieving unhappiness. Moreover, while some limits upon the individual's behavior were necessary and inevitable, Freud believed there was sufficient scope to relax the undue pressures and constraints imposed by society. While a society entirely without guilt and repression was impossible, there was at least the possibility—indeed, this was the ethical and even perhaps the “political” goal of psychoanalysis—of a society and culture that was less repressive and less guilt-inducing.

So, Freudian psychoanalysis rails against the unjustified and excessive demands of the super-ego and the social order, with their irrational moral strictures and prohibitions:

In our research into, and therapy of, a neurosis, we are led to make two reproaches against the super-ego of the individual. In the severity of its commands and prohibitions it troubles itself too little about the happiness of the ego, in that it takes insufficient account of the resistances against obeying them—of the instinctual strength of the id [in the first place], and of the difficulties presented by the real external environment [in the second]. Consequently we are very often obliged, for therapeutic purposes, to oppose the super-ego, and we endeavor to lower its demands. Exactly the same objections can be made against the ethical demands of the cultural super-ego. It, too, does not trouble itself enough about the facts of the mental constitution of human beings. It issues a command and does not ask whether it is possible for people to obey it. On the contrary, it assumes that a man's ego is psychologically capable of anything that is required of it, that his ego has unlimited mastery over his id. This is a mistake; and even in what are known as normal people the id cannot be controlled beyond certain limits. If more is demanded of a man, a revolt will be produced in him or a neurosis, or he will be made unhappy.<sup>4</sup>

Is there not a clear, strident anti-authoritarianism in Freud's words here; a cry of protest against the excessive constrictions under which the individual is placed? Is there not expressed here a desire for greater individual freedom and autonomy, as well as a recognition of the rebellion that lies latent within us—a rebellion which would be fully understandable, even justified, given the severity of social restrictions? The id, for Freud, is the original anarchist—the wild unconscious with its socially unacceptable drives and desires that are only partially contained by the ego and which threaten to explode the very institutional

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<sup>4</sup> Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 89–90.

framework of civilization. Indeed, the central fiction of psychoanalysis—the story of Oedipus—is one of rebellion and transgression: the Oedipal subject rebels against the law of the Father, the symbolization of patriarchal authority which blocks and prohibits the child's desire. And it is through this process of rebellion that the child becomes, albeit with varying degrees of success, an autonomous individual.

We have to see psychoanalysis, then, as a critical interrogation of the limits and prohibitions of our society. As Herbert Marcuse said, Freudian psychoanalysis, before its revisionist permutations, was a “radically critical theory.”<sup>5</sup> Certainly in Freud's time his ideas were perceived as a radical assault on the moral foundations of bourgeois society; his theory of the unconscious, with its illicit and inadmissible impulses and wishes, and his discovery of childhood sexuality, were just as damaging to the Victorian moral universe and its own self-image, as Darwin's theory of evolution. Indeed, in many ways Freud is just as disturbing to our sensibilities today as he was in his own time.

Surely, then, psychoanalysis finds some preliminary common ground with anarchism, that most heretical and revolutionary of political doctrines, in which the freedom of the individual from repressive social constraints is paramount. Central to both discourses is the story of human rebellion and freedom. Furthermore, anarchism, perhaps more than any other revolutionary philosophy, is concerned with what might be called the psychosocial domain—the domain of inter-subjective relationships, in which one's everyday relations with others are of real ethical and political concern.<sup>6</sup> Hence the importance to anarchism of “prefiguration”—achieving the revolution first in terms of one's everyday relations with others, as a condition for the achievement of the revolution at the broader societal level; and the rejection of strategic means-ends thinking. A central problem for anarchists is the desire for authority which, as Bakunin recognized, lurked within our breasts, and which would, given the temptations of power, lead to authoritarian behavior if the apparatus of command—the state—were not demolished as the first revolutionary act:

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5 H. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* [1955] (London: Routledge, 1998), 238.

6 The anarchist Gustav Landauer saw the state primarily as a relationship, one that could only be destroyed by ‘contracting’ other kinds of relationships and by behaving differently. See G. Landauer, “Schwache Staatsmänner, Schwächeres Volk!” *Der Sozialist* (15 Jun. 1910), reprinted and translated as “Weak State, Weaker People,” in *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, ed. and trans. G. Kuhn (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010), 213–214.

Man's nature is so constituted that, given the possibility of doing evil, that is, of feeding his vanity, his ambition, and his cupidity at the expense of someone else, he surely will make full use of such an opportunity. We are all of course sincere Socialists and revolutionists; and still, were we to be endowed with power, even for a short duration of a few months, we would not be where we are now.<sup>7</sup>

Here we have Bakunin sounding very much like Freud, expressing a fundamental distrust of human nature and its desire for power and authority, which must be tempered by creating alternative social arrangements, or, rather, by removing the structures which allow such desires to be realized. My point is that anarchism, as a revolutionary philosophy, was keenly aware of the subject's latent authoritarian tendencies and desires—which, if not checked, would only condemn the revolution to reinstituting authoritarian political and social structures—and therefore of the importance of encouraging alternative, non-authoritarian relationships on a micro-political level.

Therefore, both anarchism and psychoanalysis are concerned with the way that power not only coerces externally, but also becomes internalized within the psyche, producing authoritarian and patriarchal attitudes as well as a desire for one's own repression and domination. Perhaps the central problem that both psychoanalysis and anarchism confront, or ought to confront, is that of *voluntary servitude*: the strange desire, observed long ago by La Boétie, which led people to voluntarily obey even tyrannical forms of power when it was clearly against their own interests to do so.<sup>8</sup> For La Boétie, power did not need to be coercive or violent: induced by a wayward, misdirected desire, people relinquished their own freedom and became willing slaves of the tyrant. Surely, the phenomenon of voluntary obedience to authority is the central problem for radical politics, a problem no less apparent today—perhaps even more so—than in La Boétie's time. Anarchists have long been aware of this problem. Kropotkin attributed the emergence of the modern state in part to people becoming "enamoured of authority."<sup>9</sup> Stirner spoke of the way that we carry "the gendarme" in our breast pocket.<sup>10</sup>

7 Mikhail Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism*, ed. G.P. Maximoff (London: The Free Press, 1953), 249.

8 Étienne La Boétie, *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*, [1576], trans. H. Kurz (Auburn, Ala.: The Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2008).

9 Peter Kropotkin, *The State: Its Historic Role* [1896] (London: Freedom Press, 1943), 28.

10 Max Stirner, *The Ego and its Own* [1844], ed. D. Leopold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 50.

Freud also endeavored to explain our passionate attachments to figures of authority. In his study of the psychodynamics of groups, Freud considers the question posed by the social psychologist, Gustave Le Bon, of why people, particularly in crowds, display a “thirst for obedience.” As Freud says, paraphrasing Le Bon, “A group is an obedient herd, which could never live without a master. It has such a thirst for obedience that it submits instinctively to anyone who appoints himself its master.”<sup>11</sup> For Freud, as with La Boétie, voluntary obedience to another’s will is an enigma requiring explanation, as well as constituting a genuine ethical problem. Freud claims to be disturbed by the power of suggestion, such as that which the hypnotist exercises over the hypnotized—something which he equates with a kind of violence—and he seeks to understand how this works, not only in individual situations, but, more importantly, in group settings where the individual instinct for self-preservation seems more readily abandoned and rendered up to the leader of the group, who is a kind of grand hypnotist. Freud observed an emotional contagion at work in group situations which emanates from the libido; individuals, who otherwise have little in common, are bound together within a group through the love instinct. For Freud, what makes this libidinal bond possible is the figure of the leader, who acts as a cipher of love and identification.<sup>12</sup> The relation of the group member to his or her leader is thus a one of love and idealization—the leader becomes something like a love object which comes to supplant the individual’s own ego ideal, which is why the follower often loses any sense of self-preservation and autonomy, and is even prepared to sacrifice himself for this object.<sup>13</sup>

To deepen this analysis of the phenomenon of voluntary obedience, Freud returns to the myth of the Primal Father, first explored in *Totem and Taboo*.<sup>14</sup> According to this social myth, the primal father—the ultimate and original patriarch—has absolute power over his sons and demands from them devotion and obedience. The sons fear the primal father equally, thus creating a bond and sense of equality and community between them. However, as the father—the archetypal absolute sovereign—enjoys unrestricted access to all the women of tribe, prohibiting it to the sons, the sons band together to kill and devour the father. Yet, so the myth goes,

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11 Sigmund Freud, “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” [1921], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. J. Strachey, Vol. 18: 1920–1922 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 81.

12 *Ibid.*, 95.

13 *Ibid.*, 113.

14 Sigmund Freud, “Totem and Taboo” [1913], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. J. Strachey, Vol. 13: 1913–1914 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 1–164.

this ultimate transgression creates a sense of collective guilt amongst the sons, and thus the law against incest arises. I will return to this later, as it has important consequences for this discussion: the removal of one form of prohibition does not necessarily free us as *internalized* constraints come to the fore to take its place.

Nevertheless, Freud's point here is to illustrate the ways in which we become attached to figures of social and political authority through a complex relation of desire and identification. As he says: "The leader of the group is still the dreaded primal father; the group still wishes to be governed by unrestricted force; it has an extreme passion for authority..."<sup>15</sup> Our blind, voluntary submission to figures of authority is as much an ethical (indeed one could also say political) problem for psychoanalysis as it is for anarchism. Indeed, if there is an ethics of psychoanalysis it is, to use the words of Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, "a libertarian protest against the hypnotist's power and an authoritarian theory of the social bond."<sup>16</sup> A deeper understanding of the human psyche, and the way it becomes libidinally integrated into systems of power and authority such that the subject obeys without even thinking about it, is surely crucial for any radical political theory. Psychoanalysis is in this sense indispensable to anarchism. This is perhaps more so the case today, where, for the most part, capitalist societies control their populations not through outright coercion—although there is this too—but what might be considered as generalized psychological manipulation.

This is not so much a question of ideology or what the Marxists used to call "false consciousness"—although here I take Slavoj Žižek's point about the way that ideology permeates external social practices, as well operating through our cynical distance from it.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, this alone raises extremely important questions about voluntary servitude and the way it operates—through habits of obedience, work, and consumption—in contemporary neoliberal societies, in which La Boétie's figure of the Tyrant or Freud's figure of the Father/Master is, for the most part, absent. Perhaps the sadness of our times lies in the fact that there is no longer any Father/Master who might serve as a cover or excuse for our voluntary obedience, and yet we obey like never before, perhaps more so than if there were a clear figure of authority to rebel against.

However, by psychological manipulation I am also referring to the whole panoply of techniques which aim to control and normalize people at the level of their psyche: everything from the widespread use of anti-depressants and

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15 Ibid., 127.

16 M. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, trans. C. Porter (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), 156.

17 See S. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989).



drugs to control behavior such as ADHD, to the prevalence of CBT as a form of therapy, to the largely unquestioned power of the pharmaceutical industry and the psychiatric establishment in the “treatment” of mental disorders.<sup>18</sup> We can add to this a much more pervasive form of psychological control, which consists in the over-stimulation of the psyche—and through this the shaping of behavior—enabled by ubiquitous and overlapping electronic circuits and communications technologies. We are utterly immersed today in the hyper-real universe of electronic media and instantaneous communication, and while this no doubt equips us with potentially important tools of political mobilization, more often than not, it has an utterly disabling and alienating effect. For instance, we suffer not from a lack of information, but rather from an *excess* of it, more than the human organism can possibly cope with, and this is what makes us feel impotent, as well conditioning and programming our behavior such that we are increasingly reduced to a bundle of reactions and reflexes, unable to concentrate on anything for more than a few seconds. Franco “Bifo” Berardi has explored the condition of the human soul under contemporary semicapitalism: the psychopathological states generated by constant over-stimulation from media images, advertising, information, semioflows—all of which result in a generalized loss of meaning and states of psychic despair.<sup>19</sup> The epidemic rise of depression and anxiety in contemporary capitalist societies is no doubt symptomatic of this.

Such forms of psychological manipulation and normalization seriously place in jeopardy the very idea of individual autonomy. The kinds of nervous stimulation and neural marketing that we are subject to today are reminiscent of the crudest of behaviorist experiments popular in the 1950s and 60s. Even the forms of treatment on offer today for psychological maladies—medication and cognitive behavioral therapy, driven as they are by the neoliberal logic of economic efficiency and the “quick-fix”—amount to nothing less than a bastardization of the human condition. While in certain cases psychoanalysis has been complicit in these processes of normalization (indeed, this was Lacan’s charge against the “ego-psychologists” who misapplied Freudian theory in the U.S.), and while Freud’s notorious nephew Edward Bernays recruited crude, popularized versions of psychoanalytic theory into the marketing of everything from cigarettes and motor cars to the American war effort, psychoanalysis on the whole refuses the superficial and degrading conception of the

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18 The “anti-psychiatry” movement, prominent in the 1960s and 70s, seems much less so today.

19 See F. Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*, trans. F. Cadel and G. Mecchia (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009).

human subject on offer today. Central to the ethics of psychoanalysis, I would argue, is actually a resistance to normalization and a respect for the dignity and absolute singularity of the human subject—and this is where, once again, psychoanalysis finds important common ground with anarchism.

Yet, what of the claim often made, including by anarchists, that psychoanalysis is politically irrelevant, even conservative, because it is *individualizing*? The contention here is that because psychoanalysis is focused on individual therapy, it simply cannot offer any radical analysis of, let alone any possibility of transforming, the broader social field—something which would require collective consciousness and action. I hope to have shown already that psychoanalysis does indeed provide us with the means to critically analyze the broader social field, particularly with regards to the subject's relationship to external authority, as well as his behavior in groups and social collectivities. Freud insisted that psychoanalysis, insofar as it explores the individual's relations with others starting from the earliest stages of life, is always an individual *and* a social psychology.<sup>20</sup>

However, a second criticism of psychoanalysis perhaps bears more weight: this is the claim, made by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their famous work, *Anti-Oedipus*,<sup>21</sup> that psychoanalysis is “representational”—that is, that psychoanalysis, particularly the Freudian kind, seeks to represent or “speak for” the subject's desire by interpreting it within the reductionist “theater” of Oedipus, thus doing a real violence to desire. Furthermore, in trapping desire within the discursive framework of Oedipus, psychoanalysis has the effect of closing desire off from social connections, thereby limiting its revolutionary potential. There is of course a parallel here with the anarchist critique of representative political structures and parties which seek to “speak for” and lead the people, interpreting their own political desires back to them in a distorted form and thus alienating and disempowering them. The subject's desire, for Deleuze and Guattari and for the anarchists, should be allowed to “speak for itself”; to try to speak for someone else establishes a position of epistemic and therefore political authority over that person.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the real problem with psychoanalysis is the way that it founds desire on *lack*—the lack of the lost object of desire, the lack of the Mother and so on—whereas desire is actually about plenitude and productivity, and always moves in the direction of rhizomatic connections with others, in the manner of “desiring machines.” By reducing desire to lack,

20 Freud, “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,” 2.

21 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* [1972], trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. Lane (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

psychoanalysis, it is claimed, does not repress desire so much as *represents it as repressed*, and this is precisely what traps desire within normalized social codes and structures:

Oedipal desires are the bait, the disfigured image by means of which repression catches desire in the trap. If desire is repressed, this is not because it is desire for the mother and for the death of the father; on the contrary, desire becomes that only because it is repressed, it takes on that mask only under the reign of the repression that models the mask for it and plasters it on its face ... If desire is repressed, it is because every position of desire, no matter how small, is capable of calling into question the established order of a society: not that desire is asocial, on the contrary. But it is explosive; there is no desiring-machine capable of being assembled without demolishing entire social sectors. Despite what some revolutionaries think about this, desire is revolutionary in its essence—desire, not left-wing holidays!—and no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude, and hierarchy being compromised.<sup>22</sup>

While I am less convinced than these two May 68ers of the essentially revolutionary nature of desire, they nevertheless touch on a crucial theme that begins to mark an important point of difference between psychoanalysis and anarchism: while anarchism might be said to work on a model of liberation—desires are repressed by external prohibitions, and must therefore be liberated—psychoanalysis is more cautious here.

If human desire is actually *constituted* through a certain repression—that is through Oedipal prohibition, through the lack of the object of desire—then not only does desire need some sort of limit to sustain itself, but, if such external limits were removed, then internalized ones would simply emerge to take their place. In other words, from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, it is too simple to talk about the liberation of desire from external constraints; liberation does not solve the problem of repression; indeed, it may actually intensify it. That is to say, if there is a conceptual difference between anarchism and psychoanalysis, it lies in their different approaches to the relationship between desire and limit, freedom and constraint; for psychoanalysis, this relationship, as we shall see, is highly paradoxical, complicating the revolutionary narrative.

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22 Ibid., 116.

### Radical Psychoanalysis: Gross, Reich, and Marcuse

Before addressing this difficulty, however, it is important to explore the politically radical tradition of psychoanalytic theory, and here I turn to three post-Freudian thinkers—Otto Gross, Wilhelm Reich, and Herbert Marcuse—all of whom developed revolutionary articulations of psychoanalysis which, in important ways, found common ground with anarchism. However, the point here is not to show that psychoanalysis fits perfectly with anarchism—as I have said it does not—but rather to argue, against claims to the contrary, that psychoanalytic theory has no application to questions of social and political transformation.

Otto Gross, the “anarchist psychoanalyst,” as he came to be known,<sup>23</sup> and forerunner of the sexual revolution and the countercultural movement, was an early disciple of Freud’s, although he later came to reject certain aspects of Freud’s theory. He saw in psychoanalysis the potential for a revolt against patriarchal authority and the means to emancipate the individual from his or her own internalized guilt and repression. The unconscious was essentially revolutionary and, by tapping into the unconscious, psychoanalysis could provide the individual with the tools of his or her own liberation. Psychoanalysis was therefore, for Gross, a revolutionary practice which could be used to overthrow the repressive social order and to promote greater individual and sexual freedom.

He proposed, moreover, that the existing social order, founded on patriarchal authority, should be replaced by a less repressive and more cooperative matriarchal order. Indeed, as Gottfried M. Heuer points out, Gross’s concern with cooperative and mutual relationships, which he saw as the innate orientation of the ego and whose promotion should be the ethical goal of the revolution, rather than what he called the “will to power,” paralleled and drew upon Kropotkin’s theory of mutual aid, which he also regarded as instinctive.<sup>24</sup> In the case of both theories, the interpersonal and intersubjective dimension is central and provides the impetus and means to achieve the social revolution.

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23 Gross told the psychiatrists who examined him in 1913: “I have only mixed with anarchists and declare myself to be an anarchist ... I am a psychoanalyst and from my experience I have gained the insight that the existing order [...] is a bad one [...] And since I want everything changed, I am an anarchist.” [Cited in G. Heuer, “The Birth of Intersubjectivity: Otto Gross and the Development of Psychoanalytic Theory and Clinical Practice,” *Sexual Revolutions: Psychoanalysis, History and the Father*, ed. G. Heuer (London: Routledge, 2011), 122.].

24 Ibid., 130–131.

At the same time, we find in Gross a certain sense of caution about the prospects of revolution. There is an acknowledgement that revolutions in the past have failed to achieve their aim of liberation, only reinventing the structures of authority and class hierarchy they sought to overthrow. For Gross, this was because of the internalized authoritarianism that we bear within us, which the revolutionary struggle often fails to dislodge:

None of the revolutions in the course of history succeeded in establishing freedom for the individual. They all fell flat, each the forerunner of a new bourgeoisie, they ended in a hurried desire to conform to general norms. They all failed because the revolutionary of yesterday carried within himself the authority ... that puts any individuality in chains.<sup>25</sup>

Psychoanalysis therefore had an important role to play in allowing the individual to recognize and free himself from this internalized authoritarianism, and this was a pre-condition for any successful revolution. In other words, for Gross, psychoanalysis was a means of extending the revolution *all the way down* into the psyche and engaging in a personal struggle against one's own "will to power"—against the desire to dominate and the desire to be dominated, which, after all, are two sides of the same coin.

A similar theme is pursued by Wilhelm Reich, whose own interest in sexual liberation and revolutionary politics might be seen as directly descending from Gross's radical interpretation of psychoanalysis, as well as from Freudian ideas about libido, repression, sexual neuroses, and the mind-body connection. For Reich, not only would internalized authoritarianism—if it is not properly addressed—condemn the outcome of revolutions, but, worse still, would produce utterly reactionary and monstrous forms of politics. In his study *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, written in 1933, Reich set out to conduct a psychoanalytic or what he called "sex-economic" investigation of the appeal of Nazism to ordinary Germans. The explanation was to be sought not within the Marxist theory of "false consciousness" but, rather, in the real desire on the part of the masses for their own domination, a desire that originates, he argued, in sexual repression. Crucially, then, the success of the Nazis was attributable not to Hitler and his supposed charisma, but rather to the masses themselves, who in a sense created him:

*But the success of this mass organization [the NSDAP] is to be ascribed to the masses not to Hitler. It was man's authoritarian freedom-fearing struc-*

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<sup>25</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 132.

ture that enabled his propaganda to take root. Hence, what is important about Hitler sociologically does not issue from his personality but from the importance attached to him *by the masses*.<sup>26</sup>

This desire for the Fascist Master arises from, as Reich puts it, an 'authoritarian freedom-fearing' structure on the part of the masses and, in particular, from the conservative attitudes and values of the lower-middle classes, which stemmed ultimately from sexual repression. These included conservative attitudes towards sexuality, a reverence for authority, an ideology of "honor" and "duty," and traditional patriarchal beliefs. Patriarchal authority within the family translated into the desire for an authoritarian state; the father was seen as a mini-Fuhrer, and this allowed people to identify with, and at the same time obey—according to the dynamic set out earlier by Freud in his study of the psychology of groups—the Fuhrer: "Notwithstanding his vassalage, every National Socialist felt himself to be a 'little Hitler.'"<sup>27</sup> There is, as he put it, an "authority craving" psychic structure within the people which the Nazis exploited and which made their tyranny possible.

For Reich, there is a direct link between sexual repression and political repression; as he shows, the self-repression of one's sexual desire—due to an internalization of conservative attitudes, moral prejudices, and mystical and obscurantist beliefs and the fears of sexuality they engender—leads to a desire to be repressed politically. Repressed sexual energy is channeled against one's own freedom. Therefore it is only by relaxing this sexual repression, so that the individual can achieve healthy sexual gratification, that he or she has any hope of living more freely and autonomously. Thus, the struggle for greater sexual freedom is directly linked to the struggle for political freedom and against economic exploitation and hierarchy; this was how Reich understood the goals of "sex-economic" practice.

The importance and centrality of sex and sexual freedom to revolutionary politics, however, has often not been sufficiently recognized by revolutionary movements themselves. Reich takes issue with Marxist-Leninism for neglecting the question of sexual freedom, and indeed for continuing to repress it in the name of a new kind of moralism in the post-revolutionary Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Reich attributes the stagnation of the Bolshevik Revolution and its deterioration into Stalinist totalitarianism in part to the failure to come

26 Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* [1933], eds. M. Higgins and C.M. Raphael (New York: Farrar, 1970), 40. Emphasis in original.

27 Ibid., 80.

28 Ibid., 161–162.

to terms with people's repressive psychic structure: the Bolshevik revolution "was a politico-ideological and not a genuine social revolution."<sup>29</sup> In other words, the Revolution failed to achieve a real transformation in the human structure. The problem here was the idea that a certain model of freedom and social organization could be imposed from above, in a hierarchical and authoritarian fashion, rather than being allowed to develop spontaneously.

There are important parallels, then, between Reich's political thought and anarchism: the post-repressive society was in a sense already immanent in social relations, and should be allowed to develop spontaneously and organically. While the masses were currently incapable of freedom, they could be guided in this direction by a new kind of "democratic-revolutionary" movement, whose task was not to lead the masses from above in the manner of a vanguard, but rather to empower them to achieve their own autonomy and emancipation. This would involve the ethical task of inculcating a sense of responsibility on the part of the masses for their own freedom.<sup>30</sup> It is here that the notion of "work-democracy," which would be the basis of the post-repressive society, becomes important. Work-democracy, which implies a collaborative, egalitarian and non-exploitative relationship to work, is based on the recognition that sexual energy and daily working activity are closely related, and that this activity should be free and self-regulated so that people can derive genuine libidinal satisfaction from their work. Once again, according to Reich, this is not an ideological or political goal that can be imposed from the top. Rather, as he puts it: "Work democracy is the sum total of all naturally developed and developing life functions which organically govern rational human relationships."<sup>31</sup>

We have the very anarchistic idea, then, that rather than a certain institutional model being imposed upon society in the name of freedom, natural social relationships and impulses should be allowed to develop organically from below:

To establish new, artificial, political systems would be not only unnecessary; it would be catastrophic. What is necessary is that the determination of the social process be given over to the natural life functions. Nothing new has to be created; all that has to be done is to eliminate the obstacles which stand in the way of the natural social functions.<sup>32</sup>

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29 Ibid., 201.

30 Ibid., 220.

31 Ibid., 264.

32 Ibid., 267.

Just as the health of the psyche depends on a certain free development of the libido, so too does the health of society depend on the free development of natural forces and energies.

The aspiration for a non-repressive society is also central to thought of Herbert Marcuse, who combined Freudian and Marxist theory into a radical psychoanalytical critique of social domination. In his work, *Eros and Civilization* (1955) which is a radical re-reading of Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, Marcuse argues, against what he sees as Freud's pessimism, that our civilization, which is founded on repression, also contains the seeds of a non-repressive society. So, in accepting Freud's premise that the social order thus far has been based on the inhibition of sexual instincts—their diversion from gratification towards work and production—Marcuse, at the same time, rejects the position that the sacrifice of happiness to the needs of civilization is necessary and inevitable. In other words, contrary to Freud, the idea of a non-repressive civilization in which human happiness is allowed to flourish, is not a utopian speculation but is actually immanent within the existing social order: "the very achievements of repressive civilization seem to create the preconditions for the gradual abolition of repression."<sup>33</sup> Freud had argued that social cohesion and cultural progress requires that the "pleasure principle" gives way to the "reality principle," with its demands of work, sacrifice, and delaying gratification. While Marcuse acknowledges the need for certain limits to be placed on the instincts—if repression were completely removed and absolutely free play given to the pleasure principle, then civilization could not be sustained—he argues that in the existing social order, the basic level of repression required for social cohesion has been overtaken by what he calls *surplus repression*, which operates in the interests of social domination and economic exploitation. Here, the "performance principle" holds sway, demanding the absolute sacrifice of happiness and gratification to the toil and drudgery of alienated labor; thus the pleasure principle is completely negated.<sup>34</sup> Existing society represses its members far in excess of what is necessary for its own survival, forcing them into a life of alienation and unhappiness for the benefit of a capitalist apparatus of domination and social hierarchy which they do not understand and have no control over.

However, for Marcuse, the performance principle which results in a surplus of production has solved the problem of scarcity, thereby creating the conditions for greater freedom and autonomy and a relaxation of surplus repression—paralleling the Marxian argument that capitalist society, in its

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33 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 5.

34 Ibid., 4.



production of surplus wealth, creates the conditions for its own overcoming. Furthermore, the repression of erotic instincts is never complete; there is always an excess that escapes repression, and which finds its expression in fantasy and imagination, which, according to Marcuse, provide the libidinal drive for projects of emancipation and the impetus for a non-repressive culture in which work is transformed into play, in a manner similar to Reich's notion of "work democracy," as well as evoking Fourier's utopian vision of eroticized work: "if work were accompanied by a reactivation of pregenital polymorphous eroticism, it would tend to become more gratifying in itself without losing its *work* content."<sup>35</sup> There is the idea here of a certain non-repressive "self-sublimation" of sex instincts into other spheres of life, producing an eroticization of relations between people.<sup>36</sup> Yet, this newfound freedom is neither a return to primitive barbarism nor a condition of unrestrained sexual license. On the contrary, as Marcuse envisions, it produces a new kind of non-repressive order and harmony: "liberated from the tyranny of repressive reason, the instincts tend towards free and lasting relations—they generate a *new* reality principle."<sup>37</sup> This is similar to the claim central to anarchism: that freedom generates spontaneous order.

At the same time, however, Marcuse introduces an important qualification here, recognizing the difficulty in realizing freedom in a society which currently mistakes unfreedom for freedom: he gives the example of the capitalist entertainment industry which is itself repressive, and yet which assumes the form of freedom, such that its repression in the interests of a more genuine freedom would be perceived by people as an assault on their freedom of enjoyment.<sup>38</sup> Yet, the difficulties in attaining freedom through the spontaneous play of instincts reflect a much deeper ambiguity in the very structure of instincts themselves. Marcuse speculates, following Freud, that there may be a structural limit *internal* to the instincts themselves which, paradoxically, generates and sustains them:

But is there perhaps in the instinct itself an inner barrier which "contains" its driving power? Is there perhaps a "natural" self-restraint in Eros so that its genuine gratification would call for delay, detour, and arrest? Then there would be obstructions and limitations imposed not from the

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35 Ibid., 215. Emphasis in original.

36 Ibid., 199.

37 Ibid., 197. Emphasis in original.

38 Ibid., 224–225.

outside, by a repressive reality principle, but set and accepted by the instinct itself because they have inherent libidinal value.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, Marcuse says that this notion of an internalized self-limit within the drives was already present in Freud: "He [Freud] thought that 'unrestrained sexual liberty from the beginning' results in lack of full satisfaction ... Moreover, he considered the 'strange' possibility that 'something in the nature of the sexual instinct is unfavorable to the achievement of absolute gratification.'" <sup>40</sup>

Here Marcuse stumbles up against a major paradox in the structure of human desire, one that creates problems for the conceptual model of repression and freedom which he largely subscribes to: this is not simply the problem that we may not actually desire freedom, but rather that full freedom might itself act as a barrier to our gratification. In other words, what is being suggested here—and what Freud, as Marcuse acknowledges, was already half aware of—is that the very condition of the instincts is their own self-limitation; and rather than the problem being their external repression, they contain their own *internal* limit which is what, paradoxically, gives them their energy and impels them forward. The implication—and it has extremely important consequences for any radical application of psychoanalysis—is that the removal of external constraints and limits, in so far as they *can* be removed or relaxed, will not necessarily bring about either freedom or satisfaction: it may be that a new kind of prohibition will simply emerge from the very heart of desire itself. Put simply, if instincts need some sort of limit, barrier, law, prohibition to sustain themselves—to resist, transgress, rub up against—then we have to at the very least question the narrative being proposed here of the instincts shaping and driving the project of human emancipation.

I am not suggesting that the three radical thinkers discussed in this section are in any sense naïve about this project: as I have tried to show, they all sound a certain note of caution about the prospects of revolution, the possibilities of full freedom, and indeed about whether people are actually ready for freedom. Nevertheless, they all tend to work within the logic of what Foucault called the "repressive hypothesis": the model according to which desire (modeled on libido) is repressed, prohibited, and constrained by external forces and therefore demands to be liberated. Indeed, it is Reich specifically that Foucault makes reference to here.<sup>41</sup> The problem, for Foucault, was that these external

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39 Ibid., 226.

40 Ibid.

41 M. Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume One*, trans. R. Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), 131.

forces—power—which supposedly represses pre-existing desire, actually work to produce and elicit it, shaping it in such a way that we believe it to be repressed; which would mean that the liberation of desire would play right into the hands of the institutions and discourses of power which constructed it. However, the problem with the repression/liberation model that Freud and, more particularly Lacan, draw attention to is a slightly different one: it is not so much that external social forces produce desire, but rather that desire to some extent *demand*s its own prohibition—for what would desire be if there were no limit to transgress and if it were allowed to fully realize itself? This claim, as we can see, complicates the radical narrative of the liberation of desire, and to understand its implications for politics we need to turn to the more “skeptical” psychoanalytic theories of Freud himself, and Lacan.

### Repression, Super-Ego and the Death Drive: Freud

For a psychoanalytic analysis of the tension between the individual's desire for freedom and the repressive restrictions of the social order, one is obliged to start with Freud's essay, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929), which is as much a work of political theory as it is a psychoanalytic investigation of the sources of neurotic guilt. Indeed, as Freud maintains, neurotic suffering and guilt are symptomatic of our being ill at ease with our civilization, the sacrifices it demands and the restrictions it imposes upon our behavior, particularly our sexual life, which it severely impairs. While our civilization gives us many great things—not only security but comforts and conveniences, cultural developments, and so on—the phenomenon of human unhappiness indicates that many of us feel that the price we have paid for these, the restriction of our instincts, is too high. In a version of social contract theory, Freud proposes that our civilization was essentially founded on a trade-off of the unfettered freedom of our primitive condition in return for security and the possibility of peaceful co-existence. However, this required the repression of the individual's more aggressive and sexualized instincts, which were dangerous to civilized co-existence. Moreover, the survival of community life depends, according to Freud, on the sublimation of erotic drives into the development of relations with others, as well as into cultural achievements. Therefore, the principle of individual freedom and that of civilized community are in tension with one another. As Freud puts it, “The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization.”<sup>42</sup> Civilization and community life are based on a progressive

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42 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 42.

taming of the individual and the repression and diversion of his instincts and desires.

Most fundamentally, civilization must hold in check the death instinct, the aggressive drive towards destruction. While Eros, the love instinct, which is directed towards union with others, may be sublimated into community life, Thanatos, the death instinct, is fundamentally hostile to civilization and destructive of all social bonds, and must therefore be restrained. Freud's well-known argument here is that the individuals' encounter with external laws and prohibitions, first through the patriarchal authority of the family, and then through an interaction with social institutions, induces him to internalise his aggressive instincts, to turn them back upon himself and towards his own ego, so that he is more likely to chafe against himself rather than against those around him. Thus we have the invention of guilt, the "bad conscience" upon which civilization is built. This death drive, turned back onto the individual, takes the form of the super-ego, the voice of moral conscience, in which, as Freud observes, there is a strong element of aggression, and which constitutes an internalized agency of self-policing and moral censorship:

The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it, is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment. Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.<sup>43</sup>

The individual appears as always guilty before the all-seeing panoptic eye of the Super-ego, which castigates him as much as much for what he hasn't done as for what he has done, punishing the saint more than the sinner. Transgressive thoughts are as morally blameworthy as transgressive deeds in the eyes of the super-ego, and, as Freud observes, the guilty, neurotic individual within civilization, so far from seeking freedom, often demands punishment.

So, as Freud would have it, the history of our civilization is the history of our repression, a repression which operates externally in the form of legal and social-moral norms prohibitions, and, more importantly, internally, in the form of moral consciousness and Super-egoic guilt. While repression and guilt are often excessive—and indeed it was the role of psychoanalysis to help the individual alleviate the neurotic guilt that was literally making him sick—they are at the same time inevitable. Some degree of constraint, repression, inhibition is necessary for there to be any possibility of peaceful coexistence

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43 Ibid., 70–71.

and community life, and guilt is the inevitable price we pay for this possibility. Our progressive taming and disciplining, firstly of the Oedipal child within the family, and later of the individual within broader society, is a necessary developmental process. There is a certain tension here, then, between Freud's cry of protest against the severity of moral constraints and the demands of the Superego discussed earlier, and his acceptance of the need for limits and constraints in order to hold civilization together.

As we have seen, the reason why repression is necessary is because of the aggressive and dangerously anti-social drives within us, which threaten to rend civilization apart. Here Freud expresses a fundamental pessimism about human nature, reminiscent of Hobbes:

The element of truth behind this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus*.<sup>44</sup>

There is a clear disagreement here with anarchism which, while not in any sense naïve about the human condition, nevertheless supposes a more or less natural instinct towards sociability, cooperation, and mutual aid. For Freud, on the contrary, the fundamentally *anti-social* individual must be disciplined into sociability and altruism; it does not come naturally or easily to him, and is arrived at only with great effort and sacrifice, and a large measure of suffering.<sup>45</sup> This is why Freud, while not entirely unsympathetic to the goals of revolutionary movements, was at the same time skeptical about their success.<sup>46</sup>

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44 Ibid., 58. Emphasis in original.

45 Freud, for instance, mentions how unnatural it is to be expected to "love thy neighbour"—and yet this is what our civilization commands us to do (ibid., 56–59).

46 Freud makes reference to the Bolshevik revolution and the aspiration to a communist society in Russia, which, he believes derives its energy from a relation of enmity and would only result in further aggression and violence once property relations are abolished: "One only wonders, with concern, what the Soviets will do after they have wiped out their bourgeois" (ibid., 62).

There seems at this juncture little to redeem Freud from an anarchist point of view. However, what if we were to suggest that the two interrelated aspirations of anarchism—individual autonomy and harmonious communal coexistence—actually presuppose a certain disciplining of the instincts? By this I mean not only that if an individual is to live with others in a community, there must be some curbs on his behavior, something which anarchists certainly acknowledge. In an anarchist community, there would indeed be rules and ethical limits, which are democratically decided (“rules without rulers”); indeed, rules, limitations and boundaries are inherent in the very notion of community, which requires some form of obligation placed upon the individual, or which the individual voluntarily places himself under.<sup>47</sup>

However, I also mean that the very possibility of freedom and autonomy requires a certain (self-) discipline. As I have suggested earlier in the chapter, it is by no means clear that our instincts *naturally* tend towards greater freedom; on the contrary, they often tend in pathological directions towards psychic attachments to authority. Such tendencies point to the dangers posed to the self and one's own freedom by one's wayward and undisciplined desires. Thus we arrive at the old problem of positive freedom, and the need for a certain discipline in order to be free—something that was recognised by Rousseau and Kant, and also in a different sense by Foucault in his discussion of “asceticism” as an ethics of self-mastery.<sup>48</sup> After all, autonomy means “self-government,” which implies the ability to master one's own desires and instincts: to be master of one's self. As Richard Flathman argues, within oneself there are tendencies, desires, and dependencies that make one more susceptible to the power of others, and therefore without discipline there is no agency and therefore no possibility of freedom.<sup>49</sup> From a Freudian perspective, it could be argued that one only has a hope of becoming an autonomous adult by first going through a process of Oedipal disciplining, by which the child encounters, and therefore has a chance of resisting, the Oedipal position of the Father; and it is only through this encounter with the position of symbolic authority that the child's instincts can be partially mastered, and that the child, in rebelling against this authority, can gain a greater sense of himself.

47 See, for instance, M. Taylor, *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

48 M. Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom: Interview with Michel Foucault,” *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume One*, ed. P. Rabinow, trans. R. Hurley (London: Penguin, 2000), 281–302.

49 See R. Flathman, *Freedom and its Conditions: Discipline, Autonomy, and Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

So, what I am proposing here—and I think this is present in Freudian theory—is that autonomy is only possible through an *agonistic* relationship with some form of authority or limit, and this of course necessitates the existence of such a limit. Moreover, we could say, again following Freud, that projects of political emancipation depend upon a certain collective discipline, as well as being “cultural” artifices, and as such, are only possible *within* civilization, and emerge from within the constraints which civilization imposes. The very fact that movements of political and social emancipation, including anarchism itself, are founded on ethical norms and political ideas which have only emerged as a result of the cultural achievements of civilization and the disciplining it entails, points to this.<sup>50</sup>

### Desire, Law, and Limit: Jacques Lacan

In developing this idea of an interdependent relationship between freedom and limit, we now turn to the thought of Jacques Lacan, who was best known for reading Freudian theory through the framework of structuralist linguistics, mostly via Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, and Jakobson. Lacan’s famous formulation—that the unconscious is “*structured like a language*”<sup>51</sup>—points once again to the *social* dimension—in Lacan’s case the external order of language and signification—within which the unconscious is situated and which psychoanalysis takes as its proper field of investigation.

Freud’s concern with the conflicting relationship between the individual and broader society is taken up by Lacan in his psychoanalytic approach to ethics. It is here that we must reconsider the relationship between desire and law, particularly moral law. As I have suggested, the “repressive hypothesis” central to the radical articulations of psychoanalytic theory discussed previously, works on the assumption that the Law—by which we can understand legal and social constraints and moral prohibitions of all kinds—restricts and represses desire. However, Lacan’s insight is to show that the relationship between desire and Law is much more ambiguous and complex: rather than law simply

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50 I have the utmost respect for the “anti-civilizational” or “primitivist” tendency in anarchism—especially the thought of John Zerzan. However, Zerzan’s radical critique of our technological civilization is still beholden to civilization and the cultural and intellectual developments which made such critiques possible.

51 J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. A. Sheridan (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 20. Emphasis in original.

acting as a limit upon desire, it actually *stimulates* and *incites* it, and it does this by holding out the promise of an impossible enjoyment—*jouissance*—on the other side of the law. In the creating a barrier between the subject and his enjoyment, the Law sustains the illusion of an ultimate satisfaction (the lost object of enjoyment, the *Thing*) awaiting him on the other side of this limit. So, in saying “no” to desire, the Law actually invites its own transgression. In other words, the Law of prohibition acts as a veil which shrouds the emptiness and impossibility of full enjoyment, which is essentially equivalent to death, thus eliciting desire. The Thing, the ultimate object of our desires, only exists insofar as there is a law to prohibit it. As Lacan says, in relation to biblical commandments: “Yet I can only know the Thing by means of the Law. In effect, I would not have had the idea to covet it if the Law hadn’t said: ‘Thou shalt not covet it.’”<sup>52</sup> So, we might propose a dialectical relationship between desire and law which, as Lacan says, “causes our desire to flare up only in relation to Law.”<sup>53</sup>

To illustrate this paradoxical relationship between desire and Law, Lacan gives the example of courtly love in the Middle Ages, which was a series of rituals and discourses—indeed, an entire system of ethics and codes of behavior—involved in the courtship of the Lady. However, so far from this being a romantic enterprise, Lacan shows that this was actually an elaborately coded set of behaviors designed to put off—to infinitely postpone through ever more exacting hurdles and capricious demands—any real sexual encounter with the Lady, whose desire must remain enigmatic and inaccessible.<sup>54</sup> The sexual encounter was thus sublimated by the male subject into a series of barriers placed in the way of love’s consummation, precisely in order that desire could be sustained. This curious ritual of courtly love might be seen as a paradigm of male desire—and indeed of the rather fraught relationship between men and women—in which the trauma of the real encounter with the Other is continually avoided, so that, as Lacan would put it, the emptiness and structural impossibility of the sexual relationship (“*Il n’y a pas de rapport sexuel*”) can remain masked. More generally, is there not something in the nature of human desire which demands precisely to *not* be satisfied, and whereby the encounter with the imagined object of desire is one of anxiety, or the degradation and diminishment of what was once desired? The fulfillment of desire is at the same time its eclipse; that which must be avoided at any cost so that we can go on desiring.

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52 J. Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. D. Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), 83.

53 Ibid., 83–84.

54 Ibid., 145–154.



What are the political implications of this? It would appear to strike at the very heart of political desire, forcing us perhaps to question what we imagine to be the ultimate aim of our political projects, and the fantasies invested in the idea of attainment of full freedom or the liberated society awaiting us on the other side of power and law. I am not suggesting that these aspirations and visions are not important to radical political mobilization; but we also need to recognize their necessarily fantasmatic role in the structuring of political desire. More importantly, however, what if it were the case that the revolutionary drive actually *needed* law and prohibition—the repressive structure of political and social authority—in order to sustain itself and to have something to oppose and transgress? And what if this were so precisely to preserve the illusion that full freedom (the satisfaction of revolutionary desire) was attainable if only this structure of authority were removed?

As a hypothesis, what I am suggesting here is not simply that symbolic authority—the prohibitive figure of the Master, or in political terms, the State—is necessary in order to sustain revolutionary desire, but that it might even serve as a sort of cover or excuse justifying a certain revolutionary pathos. In other words, might it not be the case that a certain figure of absolute and repressive political authority allows us to say, effectively: *we would be truly free if it were not for the State that stands in our way*? Is there not a sense in which anarchists fantasize about the all-powerful State that denies their freedom, in the same way that they fantasize about the freedom that awaits them once the state is destroyed? We have at least to consider the possibility that the revolutionary narrative actually needs the State to sustain its desire, and, indeed, that this might even prevent us from living freely in the here and now.

Furthermore, given this dialectical relationship between the desire for freedom and the law of prohibition identified by Lacan, what actually happens when the law breaks down and when the restrictions and barriers to our freedom are removed? Does that mean that we are now free? Alas, things are not quite so simple. Because, according to Lacan, an encounter with the object of desire would be traumatic and anxiety-provoking, and because, as Freud himself noticed, desire needs its own limit, the removal of the Law of prohibition does not mean that we are finally free, but rather that a new form of *internalized* prohibition comes to fore in its place, rendering us even more unfree. Like the obsessive who fantasizes about the death of his father, whom he imagines acts as a barrier to his freedom, and yet who, when his father finally does die, cannot enjoy his freedom and is instead wracked by guilt, the collapse of one form of social and symbolic authority actually intensifies prohibition and incapacity. In reversing the line from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* ("God is dead; now everything is permitted"), Lacan says: "God is dead, nothing

is permitted anymore.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, the removal from the modern consciousness of this ultimate patriarchal Father, this symbol of traditional authority and prohibition, so far from liberating us, is the final confirmation of our repression.

That is why there is, according to Lacan, a structural correspondence between the moral law of Kant and the perverse universe of Sade. The perversity of the Kantian attachment to the moral law—beyond any pathological considerations or interests—finds its logical counterpart and echo in the strange morality of the Sadeian universal law of perversion, whose morbid injunction to the unadulterated use and enjoyment of bodies, the absolute right to *jouissance*, becomes something like a categorical imperative.<sup>56</sup> So, the point here is that the breakdown of traditional forms of moral and social authority does not inaugurate the reign of freedom, but rather instantiates a new regime of prohibition—and here we should pay attention to Lacan’s remark about the failure of the libertarian project: “The naturalist liberation of desire has failed historically. We do not find ourselves in the presence of a man less weighed down with laws and duties than before the great critical experience of so-called libertine thought.”<sup>57</sup> Many of the experiments of sexual liberation in the 1960s and 70s proved failures, with free sex communes ending up as rather boring and sad spaces of routinized sex, subject to their own injunctions and rules, driven by a kind of desperate and morbid desire for a *jouissance* which at the same time runs up against its own internal barrier.<sup>58</sup> So the removal of one limit engenders another, as there is no greater threat to desire than the absence of limits. Today’s era of sexual permissiveness—at least in most liberal-democratic societies—seems to me to be permeated by a kind of sadness and loss of enjoyment, as we appear to have reached a point of saturation and boredom in matters of sex; the ever more transgressive and extreme forms of pornography on offer today are same time indicative of a kind of despair at a sexual revolution that has now run out of ideas.

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55 J. Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII*, trans. R. Grigg (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 106.

56 J. Lacan, “Kant with Sade,” in *Écrits*, trans. B. Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 645–667.

57 Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 4.

58 David Bennett discusses the history of sexual revolutions, and in particular of the Friedrichshof sex commune in Austria, whose initial celebration of free and spontaneous sexuality quickly deteriorated into a routinized and ordered regime of sex, complete with computer-generated “fuck lists.” See “Sexual Revolutions: Towards a Brief History, From the Fall of Man to the Present,” in Heuer, *Sexual Revolution*, 35–51.

More broadly, in contemporary societies, in which traditional, patriarchal authority no longer functions, in which law is no longer taken seriously and political leaders are figures of popular ridicule—a transformation which Lacan characterized long ago by the “decline of the paternal function”—can we not see the emergence of new forms of control which are all the more terrifying for their “formlessness” and lack of hierarchy? In today’s neoliberal societies, in which voluntary obedience to the dictates of the market and consumer culture replaces traditional authoritarianism, control takes the very form of individual freedom and enjoyment. As Žižek, following Lacan’s insight, remarks, there is now a Superegoic injunction to Enjoy! which is much more compelling than the strictest of moral prohibitions.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the proliferation today, in these supposedly freer and more permissive times, of rules governing the minutiae of everyday behavior—everything from restrictions on smoking in public places, to rules on sexual harassment in the workplace, to the PC policing of language itself, and to the prevalence of “ethics committees” in all kinds of institutions—points to the new kind of obsessiveness which has come to take the place of traditional forms of authority.

That our liberal societies, with their formal rights and freedoms, are, on an everyday level, highly *illiberal* and have come to resemble many of the traits of the fundamentalist societies they like to proclaim their distance from, should come as no surprise. Moreover, the decline of the traditional figure of the Father, as the symbol of prohibition and law, does not, once again, mean the end of authority, but simply a different kind of authority. Instead, we see the proliferation of what might be called “perverse fathers”: no longer, in Žižek’s example, the father who says “no” to his son’s enjoyment—thus allowing a space for transgression when his back is turned—but who rather, with a glint in his eye, says “yes,”—thus effectively making any kind of transgression, and therefore any kind of enjoyment, impossible.<sup>60</sup> We see this figure in politicians too—perhaps most paradigmatically, in recent times, in Silvio Berlusconi and Donald Trump, who, far from being the austere leader aspiring to moral

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59 S. Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (London: Routledge, 2008). See also T. McGowan, *The End of Dissatisfaction?: Jacques Lacan and the Emerging Society of Enjoyment* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2004).

60 As Jana Costas and Alireza Taheri have argued, the collapse of traditional symbolic authority in our societies has led to the uncanny return of the persecutory fantasy of the Primal Father—the ultimate figure of unconstrained *jouissance*—which becomes omnipresent and produces guilt and anxiety everywhere. See “‘The Return of the Primal Father’ in Postmodernity? A Lacanian Analysis of Authentic Leadership,” *Organization Studies* 33, no. 9 (2012): 1195–1216.

authority, more or less openly embodied his own corruption, debauchery, and farcicality. Political authority today, it would seem, invites its own transgression, even its own ridicule, with politicians routinely lampooning themselves on idiotic “reality TV” shows.

### What You Want Is Another Master!

We can see here, then, how problematic and ambiguous the notion of liberation from repression has become, at a time when control takes the form of freedom, and when liberal permissiveness and the relaxation of sexual constraints produces guilt and anxiety, and ends up in the demand for new restrictions and limits. No doubt Lacan foresaw this when he responded to his rebellious students during the May 1968 uprising with these enigmatic words: “Revolutionary aspirations have only one possibility: always to end up in the discourse of the master. Experience has proven this. What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will have one!”<sup>61</sup> However, while this might appear to damn revolutionary endeavors from the very start and align Lacan with a conservative and apolitical position, I propose an alternative reading: is there not a warning here, addressed to revolutionaries, that unless they come to terms with their own hidden desire for mastery, they risk replicating one form of authority and power for another; and was this not precisely the same warning that the anarchists addressed to Marxists? These words might therefore be taken as an admonition to confront and interrogate the vagaries of one’s own revolutionary desire, the fascination with power and the aggressive and authoritarian impulses that lie in all of our breasts—something that was recognized, in different ways, by both Bakunin and Freud, as well as Gross and Reich.

In his Seminar XVII (presented 1969–70, largely in response to May ‘68), Lacan introduced the theory of the four discourses that constituted the social link. By “discourse,” Lacan means a formal *structural* position constituted by fundamental relations of language, but which is beyond actual words and utterances: a “*discourse without speech*.”<sup>62</sup> These four discourses are that of the University, Master, Hysteric, and Analyst. These discourses are important to the question of radical politics because they are a way of explaining social changes and upheavals. Moreover, these discourses show that the link between transgression and authority is constituted by a structural, and indeed inevitable, relation between discursive positions.

61 Cited in Y. Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1999), 12.

62 Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 12. Emphasis in original.

The discourse of the Master embodies *self-mastery* and sovereignty—the attempt to constitute an autonomous ego, one whose identity is secure in complete self-knowledge. This discourse is characterized by the dominance of the Master Signifier (S<sub>1</sub>), through which the subject sustains the illusion of self-identity. The discourse of the Master stands in a particular relation of authority to knowledge, seeking to dominate it, and exclude from consciousness the knowledge of the unconscious—the *knowledge that is not known*—as this would jeopardize the ego's sense of certainty.<sup>63</sup> The Master's attempt to gain authority over knowledge instantiates a position of political sovereignty and an attempt to gain mastery over the social field.<sup>64</sup> As Lacan shows, moreover, political movements and discourses which seek to transform society, to overthrow the dominant discourse of the Master, are still trapped within this discourse and ultimately perpetuate it, ending up in the same place of power and authority. The discourse of the Master thus encompasses even those revolutionary theories which seek to overthrow it:

What I mean by this is that it embraces everything, even what thinks of itself as revolutionary, or more exactly what is romantically called Revolution with a capital R. The discourse of the master accomplishes its own revolution in the other sense of doing a complete circle.<sup>65</sup>

Central here is the relationship between the Master and the Hysteric. Because of the dominance of the S<sub>1</sub> in the Master discourse, an excess of enjoyment is produced—the *a* or *plus-de-jour*—for which there is no place in this discourse, and which is therefore excluded and projected onto the slave, as in Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic. Therefore, the knowledge of the object-cause of the Master's own desire is denied to him. What this means, however, is that the position of the Master is really the position of *castration*, as he is cut off from his *object a*, from enjoyment. What the Master discourse conceals, then, behind its posture of certainty and fullness of identity, is a fundamental lack. It is precisely this lack that the discourse of the Hysteric, in a paradoxical fashion, homes in on.

The position of the Hysteric is characterized by an identification with an unsatisfied desire. Because the agent here realizes her lack—the lack of the

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63 Moreover, it is the role of the University Discourse to provide the justification through knowledge of the discursive "truth" of the Master's position.

64 Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 31.

65 *Ibid.*, 99.

object of desire that will complete her identity—her position is characterized by a demand to know who she is and what her desire is.<sup>66</sup> This demand is always addressed to the other, and it is because of the nature of this demand that the Hysteric makes a Master out of the other. In other words, the Hysteric's demand is addressed to the Master, who is expected to provide an answer to her desire. However, due to the impossibility of satisfying this desire, the answer that the Master provides is always wrong or inadequate. In order to keep his desire alive, the Hysteric therefore has a vested interest in sustaining the lack in the Master. The Hysteric is thus always testing the knowledge and authority of the Master who, in trying to conceal his lack and shore up his position of authority, provides answers that only reveal his impotence and lack all the more. The Hysteric thus exposes the imposture of sovereign authority. The Hysteric increasingly comes to see the Master as an *impediment* to the realization of her desire; however, at the same time, she has to sustain the position of the Master in order to sustain her desire, for once desire is satisfied, it collapses. Do we not have here the very pathos of revolutionary politics?

While things might appear to be an impasse, Lacan proposes a way of breaking out of this bind between transgression and authority. Here another discourse must intervene—that of the Analyst—which, according to Lacan, offers the only genuine counterpoint to and subversion of the position of the Master. The role of analysis, in Lacanian terms, is to allow the subject to own his or her alienation and desire, by confronting him with his own unconscious fantasy—producing a gap between the subject and ego idea—and to accept that the Other, which supports this fantasy structure, is itself deficient, lacking, and ungrounded. This would be what Lacan calls *la traversée du fantasme*—crossing or traversing the fantasy. In other words, the intervention of the Analyst offers the subject the possibility of achieving greater autonomy: while master signifiers continue to exist for the subject, they are ungrounded and lack ultimate authority, and the contingency of the social field and the subject's place within it becomes fully visible. In other words, while the subject cannot entirely escape the Master's discourse—escape into what, apart from another Master's discourse?—he or she is able to gain a greater distance and autonomy from it, and is able to bring about change.<sup>67</sup>

Let us try to understand this process in political terms. Going through the Analyst's position might involve, on the one hand, a questioning of the

66 See P. Verhaeghe, "From Impossibility to Inability: Lacan's Theory on the Four Discourses," *The Letter: Lacanian Perspectives on Psychoanalysis* 3 (Spring 1995): 91–108.

67 Costas and Taheri, "The Return of the Primal Father," 1201.

fundamental fantasy that has sustained revolutionary projects in the past—the idea of total liberation and social transformation, and the image of the harmonious and free society “on the other side” of power and authority. Here I would invoke Foucault’s warning that revolutionary liberation does not necessarily solve the problem of power, and that what is more important are the “practices of freedom” in the present, whereby one engages agonistically with the specific power relations.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, we can also think about the way in which the Analyst’s discourse fosters a greater autonomy within the political subject by revealing the imposture and impotence of political authority, unmasking the essential powerlessness of power. We have seen the way in which the fantasy of the all-powerful State serves as both a provocation and an impediment to revolutionary action. The anarchist’s desire to destroy the State is caught within a strange dialectic in which the State is both needed as an incitement to revolution, as well as serving as a kind of cover or excuse for an internal deadlock. Perhaps it would be more effective to say that the Master (or the State) exists but that it has no real authority; that it is nothing more than an empty symbolic shell whose existence is entirely contingent and ungrounded, and whose only power is the power that we give it.

The Analyst’s position teaches us that all symbolic authority is ultimately a fake, and that while it might continue to exist in some abstract sense, it has no real determination over our lives. Perhaps, in other words, the Analyst’s discourse allows us to realize that while Power exists it has no real power over us, and that we are *always already free*. It seems we have returned to La Boétie’s astonishing insight: people, living under tyranny, had the power all along and the Tyrant’s power was essentially an illusion; freedom was therefore simply a matter of recognizing this and willing to be free. La Boétie’s problematic of voluntary servitude—which has as its radical flipside voluntary *inservitude*—might be seen as an example of the Analyst’s intervention. So, too, might Stirner’s idea of insurrection, as opposed to revolution:

Revolution and insurrection must not be looked upon as synonymous. The former consists in an overturning of conditions, of the established condition or *status*, the state or society, and is accordingly a *political* or *social* act; the latter has indeed for its unavoidable consequence a transformation of circumstances, yet does not start from it but from men’s discontent with themselves, is not an armed rising but a rising of individuals, a getting up without regard to the *arrangements* that spring from it. The Revolution aimed at new arrangements; insurrection leads us no longer

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68 Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom.”

to *let* ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves, and sets no glittering hopes on “institutions.” It is not a fight against the established, since, if it prospers, the established collapses of itself; it is only a working forth of me out of the established.<sup>69</sup>

Unlike the revolution, which springs from the Hysteric’s condition of powerlessness—which is why it seeks to insert itself within the position of the Master—the insurrection signifies an *indifference* to power, and it starts from the condition of *ontological freedom*. So it is not a question of seeking to transform social relations, although this might be one of its outcomes, but rather of the subject distancing himself from power, turning his back upon it, whereupon power collapses. Stirner, the Analyst of the anarchist tradition, shows us not how we might become free on the back of a revolution—which would only re-establish authority—but how we are already free, and how we might come to recognize this, beyond the “spooks” and apparitions of power.

### Conclusion

The ontological freedom and autonomy made possible by the realization of the radically contingent nature of social reality and the ungroundedness of authority, does not render political action unnecessary or superfluous. On the contrary, it frees political action from, on the one hand, utopian promises, and on the other, from disabling fantasies about omnipotent power and insurmountable authority. It allows political desire to traverse its own fundamental fantasy. While it is certainly the case that anarchism’s encounter with psychoanalysis complicates the narrative of revolution and liberation—revealing its paradoxical dependence on law and limit—it also allows not only a deeper understanding of the political psyche, but provides important ethical tools with which to interrogate the subject’s desire. The opening up of the social-symbolic space might be seen as a common goal of these two traditions of thought which are, in different ways, both committed to human freedom and autonomy.

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69 Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 279–280. Emphasis in original.



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# Anarchism and Nineteenth-Century European Philosophy

*Pablo Abufom Silva and Alex Prichard*

## Introduction

The fact that anarchist ideas in the nineteenth century developed within a culturally diverse and geographically diffuse group of autodidacts and political revolutionaries rather than professional philosophers may go some way toward explaining their eclectic and unorthodox character. Motivated by a common disgust with bourgeois thought and its failure to bring clarity to the most important social and political issues of the day, anarchist intellectuals such as Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin pursued alternative ways of thinking that yielded similar conclusions about freedom, equality, and justice. Although these conclusions gradually coalesced into a unique political philosophy predicated on the rejection of capitalism, organized religion, and the state, anarchists arrived at them by way of various routes with different starting points. This chapter explores a few of these intellectual trajectories in the broader context of nineteenth-century thought.

The first section, which focuses on social ontology, examines various classical anarchist approaches to the relationship between individual and society. The second section discusses questions of method and epistemology, exploring how classical anarchists drew upon the concepts and frameworks of their more illustrious forebears and contemporaries to develop, among other things, an oddly post-modern view of history. The third and final section considers the role played by the foregoing in the development of core anarchist concepts during the period.

## Society and Social Ontology

Within anarchist thought in the classical period (arguably from Proudhon to Kropotkin), there was a clear disjuncture in the way in which writers understood the ontology of politics. Who or what is the proper locus of moral worth: individuals or society? Whence do our ideas and moral inclinations originate: from within or without? These are questions of ontology—questions that

precede epistemology precisely because the latter presupposes ontological positions. Significantly, answers to these questions are also unavoidably political. To assert the sanctity of the individual and of free will and free thought might sound revolutionary, but it was decidedly counter-revolutionary in the ferment of the Jacobin Terror, where the murderous defense of the good of the whole and the moral inconsequence of the individual spread fear through the whole of Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century we see most anarchists trying to walk a tightrope between the demands of community and individuality, attempting to establish either a creative balance (Proudhon) or else a revolutionary synthesis (Bakunin) between them.

Some of the most important philosophical contact points—chief among them Smith, Hume, Rousseau, Kant, Comte, and Hegel—will be familiar to students of politics and philosophy. Although all of these thinkers place the individual, rational, emotive, and purposive at the core of their social philosophies to varying degrees, they nonetheless assign different weights to the relative needs of society against their underlying ontological commitments to the individual. For example, Auguste Comte, the father of sociology and a key developer of positivism, was a staunch materialist who believed that free will was a myth and that historical and material processes of biology, psychology, technology governed the future.<sup>1</sup> For Comte, ordinary individuals have no role to play in these processes. In their place, “Priest Scientists” rule over society atop a rigid social pyramid in which the laborers at the bottom are mere thralls to forces beyond their control. Kant, in contrast, believed that the French Revolution had ushered in a new era of rights and progress in which all human beings are recognized as morally equal. For Kant, it is the capacity for reason, quite distinct from the material workings of the universe, that invests individuals with free will and sanctifies them as ends in themselves. Individual human wills, he further contended, would converge across historical time into a rational “kingdom of ends” and usher in a perpetual peace.<sup>2</sup>

Although Kant’s was an explicitly sexist political philosophy<sup>3</sup> and was not widely taken up by revolutionary theorists, his ideas were available through various unofficial translations to Comte, whose later French translator, Joseph Tissot, was a good friend of Proudhon’s. Likewise, Kant’s ideas were central to

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1 A. Comte, “Plan of the Scientific Work Necessary for the Reorganization of Society,” in *Comte: Early Political Writings*, ed. H.S. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 47–144; A. Comte, *System of Positive Polity* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968).

2 I. Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose,” in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. H. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 41–53.

3 S. Mendus, “Kant: ‘An Honest But Narrow-Minded Bourgeois’?” in *Essays on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, ed. H. Williams (Cardiff, U.K.: University of Wales Press, 1992), 166–190.

Hegel's own intellectual development and, through Hegel, to Bakunin as well. Like all natural scientists of the nineteenth century, Kropotkin was surely familiar with Comte's positivism, though he would have found little difficulty in distancing his own politics from those espoused in Comte's naturalist positivism. Kropotkin's planned decentralization, after all, could not have been further from Comte's technocratic pyramidal society, even if their mutual rejection of hidden hand economics was plain.<sup>4</sup> It is in this way that these ideas percolated down through to the revolutionaries. In view of their audience and the populist style of their writing, thinkers like Proudhon and Bakunin rarely referenced writers like Kant and Comte directly. Following the failures of the Utopian Socialists, Comte in particular would have been considered counter-revolutionary, which is why Marx references him so rarely. Nevertheless, we see in nineteenth century anarchist writings concerted attempts to think through basic philosophical questions for a revolutionary purpose.

Following Rousseau and Hegel, Bakunin, Proudhon, Kropotkin, and others argued that moral conscience is innate in human beings.<sup>5</sup> Most tried to find some way of balancing this innate conscience with the reality of social norms and the outcomes of individual rational deliberation. The more explicitly Hegelian anarchists, from Bakunin onwards, were more likely to assume a certain cultural vitalism, wherein a people's identity is a function of the land they inhabit and cultural traditions they practice as well as the material forms of oppression they experience. Kropotkin, by contrast, argued that a sensibility towards mutual aid was a factor of human evolution and central to species development.

There were three key focal points of critique that differentiated anarchists from their contemporaries. On the question of religion, the state, and capitalism, anarchists took lines that were uncompromisingly distinct. Let's take these in turn. Ontological questions were predominantly theological questions in the nineteenth century and ontological arguments for or against the existence of God were typically premised on a commitment to some other primary value—for example, reason. It is not hard to see how the scope of such arguments quickly broadened to the nature of existence itself, for if the existence of God is open to rational scrutiny, the same is true in principle of the existence of objects, of the conscience, of ideas, and so forth. The converse, of course, is that due to the proximity of ontological arguments to theology, radical

4 R. Kinna, "Kropotkin's Theory of Mutual Aid in Historical Context," *International Review of Social History* 40 (1995): 259–283.

5 See E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. F.C.A. Koelln and J.P. Pettegrove (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951).

Enlightenment philosophers tended to avoid it. Consequently, arguments about social reality were couched in very different terms. For example, Kant rejected ontological arguments on empiricist and rationalist grounds, preferring to make a distinction between phenomena and noumena.<sup>6</sup> Although Kantian philosophy—including its moral deontology—implied a host of ontological assumptions, its foremost emphasis is epistemological in character.

Much of Proudhon's *System of Economical Contradictions* and *On the Creation of Order in Humanity* is given over to this discussion.<sup>7</sup> Bakunin's *God and the State* likewise draws parallels between religious and political forms of subordination. In the intervening years, however, Feuerbach's anthropological account of religion had risen to prominence and, in so doing, shifted the focus of ontological argument from the question of God's existence or non-existence to how the *concept* of God serves as an expression of human community. The nature of the social, accordingly, became a primary emphasis of philosophical debate. During the Restoration period (1815–1830s), the religious counter-revolution (particularly in France) began to stress the transcendent nature of religious and political community, the role of war in “pruning the human tree” (Hegel), and the extent to which religious ideas give permanence and order to society.

It is not difficult to see how the individual might drop out of such an analysis or, indeed, how problematic it might be to justify an individualist ontology. But this was just one way in which the relationship between the individual and the collective came to be framed. Another can be found in the sundry debates that unfolded between idealists and materialists. Filtered through Comte's materialist positivism, Hume's empiricism demanded that only brute facts and observable material or efficient causes could be said to be real, in which case ideas are only responses to external stimuli and internal biological impulses. Though rarely acknowledged, the influence of Comte is plain in Marx's contention that modes of consciousness are a function of the material conditions of production and that classes rather than individuals are the proper object of socialist analysis.

The writings of the anarchists reflect and in some ways seek to resolve the binary oppositions that characterize nineteenth century thought. For example, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon believed that what distinguishes the human from the non-human is both its social nature as well as its capacity for intelligent

6 I. Kant. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. V. Politis (London: J.M. Dent, 1993).

7 See P.-J. Proudhon, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou, Philosophie de la misère*, 2 vols. (Paris: Guillaumin, 1846); P.-J. Proudhon, *De la Création de l'Ordre dans l'Humanité, ou Principes d'organisation politique* (Paris: M. Rivière, 1927).

productive activity (i.e., work).<sup>8</sup> Because sociability and productivity are both defining features of the human species, the study of society must be approached from the fundamental fact of labor as an originally human experience. The division of work in an emergent industrial society introduces a new element which Proudhon calls “collective force”—i.e., the association and simultaneity of productive tasks. Collective force has a corresponding ideal, or cognitive aspect, which Proudhon terms “collective reason.”<sup>9</sup> Both are manifested in the purposeful and collaborative enterprises of individuals within groups and become real insofar as they possess causal power within society. While groups take innumerable forms, from football clubs to rock groups, Proudhon considers the social institution of work to be of primary importance. Work is not only productive of things, but also of people; collaborative work within and between groups and individuals—the learning on which it depends and the division of social labor it precipitates—is what makes society and individuals what they are. Individual existence cannot be understood apart from the cooperative nature of work as a defining feature of the human species, especially in industrial societies. It is from this starting point that Proudhon arrives at a critique of capitalist exploitation as a private appropriation of collective labor. This perspective entails a moral judgment regarding capitalist society: since collective production is the basis of society, social institutions that work toward private appropriation (such as the State or capitalist enterprises) should be considered immoral. The same is true of withdrawing surplus from cooperative enterprises, democratic institutions, and anything else that affirms the collective nature of the wealth of society for the sake of private interests.

Mass labor unions did not exist during Proudhon's lifetime. Rather, worker groups organized through guilds and pursued trade representation in government assemblies. Proudhon never saw the mass unions that would come to dominate working class politics within 20 years of his death in 1865. Bakunin, on the other hand, was a key member of the International Workingmen's Association (or “First International”), which was heavily populated by Proudhonists and those who survived the massacre of the Paris Commune in 1871. As labor militancy became increasingly pronounced in the 1870s, Bakunin and his contemporaries took a far more explicitly collectivist approach to social ontology. The former's indebtedness to Hegel played a significant role in this regard. Although he follows Proudhon in regarding individual freedom as

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8 P.-J. Proudhon, *What Is Property?* trans. D. Kelley and B. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

9 P.-J. Proudhon, “The Philosophy of Progress,” *Libertarian Labyrinth* (2012), <http://library.libertarian-labyrinth.org/items/show/3123>.

the crowning achievement of human development, Bakunin conceives the individual in Hegelian terms as fundamentally belonging to a natural and social whole that produces and determines the individual itself.

For Bakunin, as for Hegel, there is no real contradiction between the individual and society. Like Comte, moreover, Bakunin understands the social production of the individual in strictly biological terms. Whatever a particular individual is depends upon the constitutive traits of the human species as well as the nature of the concrete society to which he or she belongs. Bakunin and Proudhon both believe that there is an essential continuity between humanity and nature insofar as humans are at bottom animals with the ability to think, speak, work, and, most importantly, rebel against injustice.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, Bakunin asserts that the conditions for individual development are biological and social, that the individual is a product of these conditions—i.e., that he or she is strongly (not absolutely) determined by them—and therefore that the very idea of individuals existing apart from the regularity of natural or social determination is at best abstraction, providing as it does the mere abstract promise (rather than the concrete reality) of a fully-developed human being.

Rousseau's impact on nineteenth century anarchism is also undeniable. His account of the pristine primitive state and the corrupting influence of arbitrary power were hugely important tropes, as was his neo-Platonic analysis of the primordial nature of human character and the role of social education in bringing about its fullest expression. Ideas such as these had a clear influence on Bakunin's Pan-Slavism as well as Proudhon's account of social justice, *inter alia*. At the same time, Bakunin formulated what is arguably one of the strongest and most thorough critiques of Rousseau's political philosophy. Following Proudhon's lead, he takes an aggressive stance against the idealist notion of "free will" and the concept of the "social contract," the latter of which he regards as historically false as well as politically inconsistent with its promises of freedom.<sup>11</sup> Whereas Rousseau derives the obligation to "force people to be free" from the nature of the ideal political union, for Bakunin it is precisely the fact that despotisms can be justified in the interests of any ideal political community that makes the state so dangerous. This critique of Rousseau is a central element of classical anarchist conceptions of freedom (not "natural" or "given" but historical) and political society (not an agreement of free individuals, but a specific mode of organizing power socially).

10 M. Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, ed. G.P. Maximoff (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 91; Proudhon, *What Is Property?* 170.

11 M. Bakunin, *God and the State* (New York: Dover, 1970).



Finally, let's turn to the question of patriarchy and sexism in nineteenth century anarchism to see what it illuminates vis-à-vis anarchist philosophy. It goes without saying that nineteenth century anarchist thought was predominantly masculinist and tended to reflect patriarchal values and hierarchies. Proudhon, for example, was quite convinced that men alone had the ability to voluntarily take on public roles that shape communities while simultaneously allowing themselves to be shaped in turn.<sup>12</sup> Women's roles, in contrast, are entirely passive and determined by their secondary natures. In uncritically accepting the standard science of the time, Proudhon believed that women had no active role in conception and, as such, were merely receptacles.<sup>13</sup> Bakunin, in contrast, held that the general liberation of humankind from oppression necessarily implied the emancipation of women. In both his theoretical writings as well as the political programs of various revolutionary organizations he founded, he repeatedly emphasized the need for social, political, and economic equality between men and women, which follows from his notion that real freedom must be understood as the fullest possible development of human faculties.<sup>14</sup> In short, the positions regarding women that individual anarchists derived from the ontologies discussed in this section varied. Although most, like Proudhon's, were deeply at odds with other aspects of classical anarchism, some, such as Bakunin's, were much more consistent with anarchism's liberatory ideal.

### Epistemology and Methodology

The Enlightenment was an age of positive science that regarded facts directly accessible to the senses—not beliefs born of inherited intuition and habit—as the *sine qua non* of inquiry. In spite of this empiricism, or perhaps because of it, philosophy was seen as a precondition and foundation for science, a necessary under-laborer in the effort to reorient the scientific endeavor and debunk the dictates of religion. Although thinkers like Hume and Comte were not scientists in the conventional sense, their philosophical enterprises were enormously relevant to the development of scientific theory and practice. As such, it

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12 P.-J. Proudhon, *La pornocratie; ou, Les femmes dans les temps modernes* (Paris: A. Lacroix, 1875).

13 Cf. M.J. d'Héricourt, *A Woman's Philosophy of Woman or, Woman Affranchised: An Answer to Michelet, Proudhon, Girardin, Legouvé, Comte, and Other Modern Innovators* (Westport, Conn.: Hyperion Press, 1981).

14 Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 158.

should come as no surprise that Proudhon, Kropotkin, and Bakunin routinely evoked ideas of scientists and scientific thinkers to defend and uphold their claims, albeit in different ways and for different reasons. The trained natural scientist Kropotkin, for example, uses the same precise, considered tone and inductive methodology in his later anarchist writings that characterized his early scientific studies. This is particularly evident in *The Conquest of Bread*, which draws upon contemporary science in its argument for the viability of collective modes of economic organization and, by extension, of an anarchist-communist society.<sup>15</sup>

Proudhon was also a defender of positive science who was so successful in popularizing Comte's work that the latter attempted to recruit him as one of his "Priest Scientists" in the late 1850s. Although he rebuffed Comte—considering him an insufferable pedant whose social philosophy was an affront to science and reason<sup>16</sup>—Proudhon, like John Stuart Mill and other leading intellectuals of that time, was fascinated by Comte's method and greatly admired the depth and insights of his research. It has been argued that much of Proudhon's output from 1858 onwards can be read as an indirect engagement with Comte's social philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Like Comte, Proudhon sought to integrate the social and the natural sciences, arguing that our natural biological impulses interact with our material environment. Unlike Comte, Proudhon strongly affirmed the existence of free will (albeit within the relative constraints of historical and social context) which, like Kant, he understood chiefly in terms of the human capacity for reason.

At the same time, there are clear differences between the ideas of Bakunin and Proudhon on the one hand and Kropotkin on the other. The fact that Proudhon was a neo-Kantian and Bakunin a neo-Hegelian is important both methodologically and politically. Although both were schooled in the reigning dialectical philosophy of the day, Bakunin follows Hegel, Comte, and Marx in understanding the dialectic as a process in which the conditions of the emergent property are given in their antecedent positioning. This implies that both concepts and history are produced by the logical and material contradictions that arise in their positioning. The thesis and antithesis are not contingently related; their harmonization presupposes a new synthesis that is an extension

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15 P. Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, ed. M.S. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

16 M. Pickering, *August Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

17 A. Prichard, *Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (London: Routledge, 2013).

of that harmonization itself rather than a distinct other. On this basis, Comte's theory of history (which Marx adapted) infers that the order of philosophical time is "past, future, present" insofar as what emerges in the future is given in the past.<sup>18</sup> Proudhon rejected this formulation—partly because of misunderstanding, but also because of the predominantly Kantian roots of his ideas. For Proudhon the synthesis is chimerical insofar as thesis and antithesis subsist in perpetual "antinomy."<sup>19</sup> What changes are the terms, or definitions of the terms, that comprise that antinomy. There is no synthesis of good and evil, or authority and liberty, to be found in the future—only re-defined or altogether different terms and a new equilibrium between the two crafted in historical context. Although Proudhon believes one can learn from the past for the future, he does not consider the future to be given and denies that there is a necessary "truth" that emerges from the given poles of the dialectic. All we find are temporary equilibria.

As is well known, the Young Hegelian critique of Hegel consisted in materializing the process of *aufhebung* by demonstrating that material contradictions within concrete social forms rather than ideas are what generate change. It is difficult to pigeonhole classical anarchists as either philosophically materialist or idealist. Virtually all of them understood capitalism as a material mode of production and most agreed with Marx that false ideas were as central to the perpetuation of the capitalism as brute force. Where Proudhon differed was in developing what he called "ideo-realism," a position which understands ideas as having the same ontological status as the material forces surrounding us.<sup>20</sup> It follows, accordingly, that the existence of ideas—no less than their potency as political or social forces—is not simply reducible to the existence of an underlying material reality.

In *On Justice*, Proudhon argues that justice is the both the cause and cumulative effect of social change, which he describes as both a material as well as an ideal process.<sup>21</sup> It follows that injustice in any form can only be recognized by a process of rational reflection coupled with direct, empirical experience. For Bakunin, in contrast, human ideas are protean, universal, and routinely subjugated by countervailing forces of injustice. Like Rousseau and Hegel, Bakunin was quicker to argue that ideas are corrupted by the prevailing social order—in which case the destruction of the latter serves as a

18 Comte, "Plan of the Scientific Work Necessary for the Reorganization of Society," 1998.

19 Proudhon, "The Philosophy of Progress."

20 P.-J. Proudhon, *De la Justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Église: Études de philosophie pratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

21 Ibid.

condition of possibility for the emergence of truth.<sup>22</sup> Matters are still more complicated with Kropotkin, for whom natural human proclivities are continually channeled through the force of existing institutions rather than waiting to be released in some future moment. On his view, human beings routinely resort to mutual aid regardless of the social order they inhabit, but social orders can be developed to better accentuate that natural impulse (as in the case of communism).<sup>23</sup> Whereas Proudhon's ontological starting point results in an emphasis on rights and justice, those of Bakunin or Kropotkin lead more directly to the path of revolutionary syndicalism.

### Philosophy of History

The revolutionary ferment of the nineteenth century and the historical rupture it represented would have made it difficult if not impossible for an anarchist at this time to not engage with the philosophy of history. Was the French Revolution a radical departure from the norm or not? Was progress possible? Was the past something to leave behind or a guide to the future? It is well known that Comte's materialism no less than Kant's rationalist idealism implied processes of change and historical progress. Both relied on secularized theodicies, or tales of how good could be borne of evil. After all, how could a time in which such battles were fought and so many died be rationalized except in terms of their historically providential form? To think otherwise would be to retreat into the conservative ahistoricism of the Catholic theocrat Joseph de Maistre, or to believe that human life was only perfectible in this lifetime and that history itself extended no further. The break from this latter Aristotelian line was as important as the former, with most agreeing with Kant that the persistence and change of social institutions could only be accounted for in trans-generational terms, and likewise that the perfectibility of both institutions and of humanity itself, though impossible today, was all but inevitable in the fullness of time. This was the major trope of the Enlightenment and is invariably replicated in anarchist thinking.

Philosophies of history, right up to the mid-twentieth century, tended to make strong teleological claims according to which history had a purpose and an end point that account for its vagaries and give shape to what would otherwise seem random. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

22 A. Prichard, "Deepening Anarchism: International Relations and the Anarchist Ideal," *Anarchist Studies* 18, no. 2 (2010): 29–57.

23 P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989).

philosophers sought to secularize religious theodicy to this end. Rousseau, Kant, and others may be seen as trying to show how good could come from evil, and how history in its fullness has a purpose even if this is only distantly visible. While Kant and Rousseau may have been advisedly circumspect, Comte was less so. For him, the material forces of history rearranged its logical order. No longer should we think in terms of past, present and future, for the future is always and already disclosed in the material structures of the past. The anarchists were not so confident. Like Kant and Rousseau, they sought to reclaim individual and collective rational agency from the clutches of either Aristotelian or neo-Platonic teleology, but they were also vocal critics of Comte and later of Marx's materialist determinism. How then did these writers think about history?

Proudhon had what may be described as a Heraclitean account of history.<sup>24</sup> Heraclitus is famous for his aphorism that "one cannot step in the same river twice," meaning that constant flux is our lot and, thus, that there is no necessary form to the path of history. This is in contrast with Platonists who argued that history and society were fixed in constant revolution (in the sense of turning and repetition) due to the natural forms humans and social stratification takes. How we understand history, accordingly, is shaped fundamentally by how we understand ourselves and our relations to one another. It comes as no surprise that anarchists have a particular take on this.

For Proudhon, the core concepts were progress and justice, and the subject of his key case study from the latter part of his life, was war and peace.<sup>25</sup> Proudhon was typical for his age in this respect, given that most of its important historical and philosophical writings were similarly concerned with war. Unlike his contemporaries, however, Proudhon was not interested in discovering how human progress was borne of our irrational and malign human natures; he does not follow the likes of Kant, Rousseau, Hobbes, and Smith by formulating a theodicy. Rather, Proudhon argued that conceptions of justice and right emerge from conflict, and that progress was less about future events somehow exhibiting "better" characteristics than the past and more about the discovery of ways to liberate social forces such that the future would be open for all to design. Modern war, he argued, put a stop to this through the industrialization of the modes of destruction, the monopolization of force by the state, and the militarization of society through state-led armaments projects

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24 Y. Simon, "A Note on Proudhon's Federalism," in *Federalism as Grand Design: Political Philosophers and the Federal Principle*, ed. D.J. Elazar (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1987), 223–234.

25 Prichard, *Justice, Order and Anarchy*.

and the development of standing armies.<sup>26</sup> Whereas statesmen like Louis Napoleon III and later Bismarck acclaimed these processes as the pinnacle of human development, Proudhon contended that they would curtail the free movement of social forces and limit the freedom of groups to make and un-make society anew. For Proudhon, reanimating the central social antagonism through the transformation of work and the division and collectivization of labor required the liberation of the collective forces of society. In an age of militarization this was unlikely.

A key concept in Kropotkin's theory of history is that of revolution, which he defines as "... a swift overthrow, in a few years, of institutions which have taken centuries to root in the soil, and seem so fixed and immovable that even the most ardent reformers hardly dare to attack them in their writings."<sup>27</sup> He continues:

A revolution is infinitely more than a series of insurrections in town and country. It is more than a simple struggle between parties, however sanguinary; more than mere street-fighting, and much more than a mere change of government, such as was made in France in 1830 and 1848 ... It is the fall, the crumbling away in a brief period, of all that up to that time composed the essence of social, religious, political and economic life in a nation. It means the subversion of acquired ideas and of accepted notions concerning each of the complex institutions and relations of the human herd.... In short, it is the birth of completely new ideas concerning the manifold links in citizenship—conceptions which soon become realities, and then begin to spread among the neighboring nations, convulsing the world and giving to the succeeding age its watchword, its problems, its science, its lines of economic, political and moral development.<sup>28</sup>

For Kropotkin, then, the most relevant historical events represent the culmination of a process in which intellectual, economic, and political forces at play pave the way for a quick, radical, and epoch-making period of revolution. Although Kropotkin wrote about history on several occasions, including in his renowned *The State: Its Historic Role*, his true historical masterpiece is

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26 P.-J. Proudhon, *La Guerre et La Paix, recherches sur la principe et la constitution du droit des gens* (Paris: Editions Tops, 1998).

27 P. Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1793*, trans. N.F. Dryhurst (New York: Vanguard Printings, 1927), 1.

28 *Ibid.*, 1–2.

*The Great French Revolution, 1789–1793*. Initiating a new approach to history that we would now call “history from below,” the text provides an account of the revolutionary role of the popular classes (i.e., the urban proletariat and the peasantry) under the direction, but ultimately independently of, the bourgeoisie.

Kropotkin's concept of rapid and radical social transformation that emerges when development is hindered by an outmoded intellectual, economic, or political regime is intertwined with his understanding of evolution. Although several accounts argue that this understanding amounts to a theory of steady progress, a closer reading of his main work on the subject, *Mutual Aid*, shows that Kropotkin thought of evolution as perpetual change rather than teleological progress and that he assigned a crucial role to human agency in the actualization of what is biologically and socially potential in a determined environment. For him, “revolution is a vitalizing process” carried out by the oppressed and exploited classes “that complete[s] the work of evolution.”<sup>29</sup> The emphasis he placed on the historic role of counterrevolution during the process of the Great French Revolution, as well as on the corruption of free cities with the emergence of the modern State, bespeaks a notion of historical progress deeply rooted in the struggles between classes and nations rather than in an optimistic natural tendency towards the good. In brief, Kropotkin believed that while human societies have an inherent tendency towards modification, revolutions are the best method to actually change them. This implies a degree of historical uncertainty, or at least the impossibility of asserting a predetermined historical teleology. Despite what he considered a natural tendency toward anarchy as expressed in the role of mutual aid in the evolution of species and human beings in particular, Kropotkin understood this tendency as a possibility—not as an inevitable, predictable fact of history. The key is the purposive actions of peoples and an appreciation of the structures that inhibit them.<sup>30</sup>

Bakunin conceives of history as an immanent process in the development of the totality of nature. There is no teleological end in the Kantian sense of an external ideal toward which history is moving but which cannot be achieved, nor is there a predetermined way to understand the stages of history through which human societies must necessarily go. Rather, the analysis of human history reveals that it must be understood as the practical realization of freedom. As Bakunin puts it, “Whatever lives ... tends to realize itself in the fullness of

29 M. Adams, “Kropotkin: Evolution, Revolutionary Change and the End of History,” *Anarchist Studies* 19, no. 1 (2011): 56–81.

30 P. Kropotkin, “Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal,” in *Fugitive Writings*, ed. G. Woodcock (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 103.

its being.”<sup>31</sup> Human society is a product of the development of nature, and so there is a continuity between nature and society, but with human species and human history appears a new phenomenon: freedom. If work and science allow human beings to reach a state of humanity, liberating themselves from the pressures of their natural surroundings and their own animality, it is the instinct of rebellion that allows them to be emancipated from the impositions of authoritarian social arrangements. The natural history of human beings is the history of their transcending their most primitive animal existence through thought, language, and work and is continued in their social history as the revolutionary overcoming of unjust social arrangements.<sup>32</sup> Since the social and political institutions of any given class society are simply products of the confrontations between heterogeneous and antagonistic social forces, the transformation of this order is historically dependent upon the balance of such forces. Human history, then, is the history of the struggle for social emancipation from exploitation and oppression.

### Freedom

How do these prior commitments shape the philosophies of freedom developed at this time? Heirs to a republican tradition based on the love of liberty and hatred of slavery as well as socialist perspective based on a critique of the wage slavery and modern forms of serfdom, anarchist thinkers in the nineteenth century adopted both a negative and a positive account of freedom. Instead of conceiving these accounts as essentially contradictory, they recognized that real freedom was predicated on both negative and positive conditions. Because some anarchists were ontologically realist, epistemologically eclectic, and believed history was open, they could not adopt a strong positive account of freedom. Rather, they invariably saw freedom in negative and largely republican terms as the freedom from the domination, whether arbitrary or simply possible, of one set of people by another. As heirs to a radical republican tradition, anarchists generalized the latter's critique of slavery and monarchical despotism across a range of social institutions—e.g., capitalism, nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism—all of which had the potential for arbitrary domination to the extent that they denied people direct control over their lives and well-being. Egoism, no less than the arbitrary domination of the group, was denounced by individualist and collectivist anarchists alike.

<sup>31</sup> Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 94.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.



The problem in both accounts is that unless the rights and prerogatives of the individuals and community were balanced by democratic procedures, public discourse, and the equalization of material conditions, the tendency of one to dominate the other would be inevitable and deleterious to the full flourishing of both.

Two different but complementary accounts of freedom are often run together. Whereas positive accounts of freedom are articulated in terms of full and equal participation, negative accounts emphasize the absence of key constraints that enabled individuals and groups to devise and pursue their own understanding of the good. It is only in the absence of arbitrary domination that full freedom of choice concerning the particular institutional means for realizing one's preferred version of the good can be realized. Most anarchists were closer to virtue ethicists than utilitarians or Kantian deontologists in denying that the greatest good could be determined in advance and grounded on universal ontological or epistemological foundations. Proudhon famously rejected Marx's overtures in the 1840s precisely because he didn't feel that shutting down alternative visions of the good with reference to one set of scientific or philosophical principles was conducive to freedom. Proudhon also disavowed deontological accounts that equated freedom with adherence to rules or principles. It is not reason alone that gives rise to the principles of justice; rather, experience, intuition, and the demands of circumstance all play a role in issuing a telling compromise. This is why Proudhon believed there to be a fundamental congruence between ends and means—or what today's anarchists call prefiguration.

For nearly all anarchists, the workplace is the principal context within which the good is pursued and realized. *Auto-gestion*, or worker self-management, was the living incarnation of the social philosophy of the anarchists of the nineteenth century, and today. It is at work that we manage those activities that are at once necessary and communal, individual and translocal. Social anarchists like Kropotkin developed an evolutionary account of ethics, one that understood the development of the concept of good in historical terms. Different types of communities formulate competing conceptions of the good in order to galvanize those communities in their struggle for survival—an ability that was taken away from them in the advent of states and modern capitalism and which anarcho-communism hoped to reacquire. For Kropotkin and Proudhon, it is precisely because individuality emerges from within complex groups that attempts to derive conceptions of the good from anything but the immanent development of both are tantamount to proclaiming that good is not within the grasp of ordinary people to realize or to shape. Rationalists, positivists, and philosophers *tout court* often argued that only those possessed

of special knowledge or insight could adequately divine the principles and foundations of right moral action. Taking this ability away from peoples and divorcing it from its social context constituted disempowerment and the imposition of arbitrary domination.

The foregoing explains why many nineteenth century anarchists believed in the liberatory praxis of nationalism, particularly in anti-colonial contexts such as the Pan-Slavic struggle or the resistance of the Irish, Indians, and Algerians to European occupation. Proudhon, for example, argued that attempts to create a unified Italy would prove deleterious to the regional and provincial autonomy of the cities and towns, especially as concerns their identities and customs, and that the imposition of an authoritarian bourgeois system of rule would only exacerbate this. It was for this reason that he endorsed federalism and worker self-management in Italy as antidotes to the monarchist Unitarianism that seemed to be galvanizing republican opinion in France.

For Bakunin, individual freedom must be understood in the context of the natural and social history of the human species from a materialist point of view. Freedom as such is not a pre-social individual property but a historical outcome “emerging from society as the necessary consequence of the collective development of mankind,”<sup>33</sup> the basic elements of which include thought, language, labor, and rebellion. Since life in society is a necessary condition for all these elements, Bakunin and other anarchists considered the notion of individuals existing before society (let alone formulating conceptions of the good independently of social interaction) to be absurd. Society, they believed, is what makes individual freedom possible.

Individual interdependence in society is not understood as interference with or obstruction of freedom. Since individuals are produced by nature and society as a complex and interconnected whole, “free will” in the sense of a completely self-determined will is a mere abstraction. Real individuals are only relatively autonomous. In this sense, freedom is not a natural pre-social trait of individuals but a historical conquest of society by collective means; it is a social fact that exists effectively only in community and in the social relations that facilitate the production of fully-developed individuals. This entails a notion of freedom that includes negative (or subjective) as well as positive (or objective) dimensions.<sup>34</sup>

For Bakunin, the subjective condition for freedom is autonomy—i.e., the ability to determine one’s own actions independently of the will of other

33 Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 164.

34 M. Bakunin, “Tres conferencias a los obreros del Valle de Saint-Imier,” in *Obras Completas*, vol. 2., ed. and trans. D.A. de Santillán (Madrid: La Piqueta: 1977), 219–257.

individuals or groups. Historically, this existence and nature of this ability depends strongly on social context. Within complex systems of domination such as capitalism, patriarchy, and the state, it is severely reduced or even nullified, particularly for the working class and other oppressed groups. Thus, autonomy necessarily requires a social order that permits and enables. In addition to subjective or negative freedom, anarchists also believe that there is a positive or objective condition for freedom—namely, the full development and enjoyment of all the physical, intellectual, and moral faculties of each individual. Freedom, accordingly, is not an unconditioned, a-social, a-historical principle inherent in individuals regardless of their situation; it is a practical matter that requires their having equal access to the means of satisfying basic needs.

Kropotkin also recognized that freedom depends on objective conditions of economic well-being and political liberty and believed that a classless and stateless society was the only guarantee of an individual's full development. In the place of individualism—which he considered “an impoverishment of individuality, or in any case the denial of what is necessary for obtaining the most complete flowering of the individual”—Kropotkin argued for a more genuine notion of individuality “which attains the greatest individual development possible through practicing the highest communist sociability in what concerns both its primordial needs and its relationships with others in general.”<sup>35</sup> In order to achieve this goal, the exploitative and authoritarian society had to be transformed into one that marshals production in the service of the cooperative satisfaction of individual and social needs.

### Conclusion: Rethinking the Nineteenth Century

In this chapter, we have sought to situate anarchist ideas in the broad political and intellectual context of the long nineteenth century. Although we have been compelled by necessity to sacrifice depth for breadth, we have nonetheless advanced four claims which, we hope, will invite further investigation from readers: first, that nineteenth century anarchists did not subscribe to a uniform set of ontological assumptions; second, that they exhibited a strong tendency toward epistemological pluralism; third, that they were historicists

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35 P. Kropotkin, “Letter to Max Nettlau, March 5, 1902,” *Anarchy Archives*, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/kropotkin/kropotkintonetlau3502.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/kropotkin/kropotkintonetlau3502.html).

who understood social transformations as complex processes involving both evolution as well as revolution; and finally, that they understood freedom both in negative, subjective terms as well as positive objective terms.

Anarchists were acutely sensitive to the socio-political contexts in which they found themselves. They began and ended their analyses with the concrete and the empirical, placing a special emphasis on the social antagonisms of class-based societies such as those found within modern capitalism. In the nineteenth century they ranged from reformers and iconoclasts to revolutionaries and scientists; although they were intimately familiar with—and occasionally took part in—the the great philosophical debates of their time, they were always committed to establishing a critical link between intellectual analysis and the social and political aims of the anarchist movement. Their primary motivation was concern with the injustice of the prevailing system and the harm it causes to the marginalized and vulnerable—a concern that permeates all the writings we have surveyed. At the same time, the anarchism of the nineteenth century was by no means a monolith, and any attempt to understand it on its own terms, let alone in relation to contemporary anarchism, must adequately recognize and account for its diverse and plural character.

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# Anarchism and Nineteenth-Century American Political Thought

*Crispin Sartwell*

## Introduction

Although it is unlikely that any Americans referred to themselves as “anarchists” before the late 1870s or early 1880s, anti-authoritarian and explicitly anti-statist thought derived from radical Protestant and democratic traditions was common among American radicals from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many of these same radicals were critics of capitalism as it emerged, and some attempted to develop systematic or practical alternatives to it. Prior to the surge of industrialization and immigration that erupted after the Civil War—which brought with it a brand of European “collectivist” politics associated with the likes of Marx and Kropotkin—the character of American radicalism was decidedly individualistic. For this reason among others, the views of such figures as Lucretia Mott, William Lloyd Garrison, Josiah Warren, Henry David Thoreau, Lysander Spooner, and Benjamin Tucker have typically been overlooked in histories of anarchism that emphasize its European communist and collectivist strands. The same is not true, interestingly, of Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre and other important social anarchists of the period, all of whom recognized and even aligned themselves with the tradition of American individualist anarchism.

## Precursors

In 1637, Anne Hutchinson claimed the right to withdraw from the Puritan theocracy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony on the sole authority of “the voice of [God’s] own spirit to my soul.”<sup>1</sup> Roger Williams founded Rhode Island on similar grounds the previous year. Expanding upon and intensifying Luther’s

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<sup>1</sup> “The Trial and Interrogation of Anne Hutchinson” [1637], <http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/bdorsey1/41docs/30-hut.html>. See also E. LaPlante, *American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman Who Defied the Puritans* (New York: HarperOne, 2005), especially chapter 10.

doctrine of “the priesthood of all believers,” the Quakers taught that the inner light of God in each individual was the only authority to which each believer was obliged to answer, a vision that was extended—in the journals of John Woolman in the late eighteenth century, for example—to all persons regardless of race and gender, and which was the basis of the opposition of Woolman and others to slavery. Such figures were often accused of “antinomianism,” the heresy of denying the law or of declaring that each person is a law unto herself.

In the context of secular politics on the cusp of the nineteenth century, we might also mention radically democratic tendencies that were expressed by some opponents of the ratification of the Constitution (the so-called “Anti-Federalists”). Broadly anti-authoritarian and anti-hierarchical commitments helped inform such events as Shays’ Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion immediately following the American Revolution. The former, for example, focused to some extent on the cancellation of debts and mortgages, which were burned when the rebels took over courthouses in Western Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> Radical democrats such as Thomas Paine and John Taylor of Caroline often edged toward anti-statism as well.

### Radical Protestantism and Anti-Slavery

By the late eighteenth century, the pacifism and individualism of the Quakers and other radical Protestant denominations gave rise to a wide array of visionary political, social, and economic positions including anti-slavery, anti-statism, pacifism, and gender egalitarianism. The period extending roughly from 1820 to 1850 witnessed the emergence of an astonishing group of American radicals including William Lloyd Garrison, Josiah Warren, Adin Ballou, Lucretia Mott, Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Maria Weston Chapman, Theodore Dwight Weld, Samuel J. May, and many others, all whom are noteworthy for their purity and profundity as well as extremism and eccentricity. The labels attached to some of their positions—“ultraism,” “come-outerism,” “perfectionism,” “immediatism,” “no-governmentism,” and, going beyond even that, “no-organizationism”—give a sense of how they were perceived by their contemporaries.

One thing these figures had in common—and which bound their reform movements together as well as to the Transcendentalists, with whom they were intertwined—was a pervasive anti-authoritarianism. Their marked hostility toward the power of the state as well as of the church, the white race,

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2 See L.L. Richards, *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).



men, the military, and capital may be traced to three fundamental and interconnected sources. The first of these is the individualism of radical Protestantism—particularly Unitarianism and Hicksite Quakerism. (May and Emerson were Unitarian ministers, for example, and Lucretia Mott was a Quaker preacher.) These denominations taught that each person is ultimately answerable only to God, that all persons are equal before God, and that God expressed himself in, and *as*, the conscience of each individual—doctrines that originated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries among radical elements of the Reformation, including various Anabaptist groups in the German-speaking regions of Europe and the Diggers of the English Civil War, some of whom made their way to the New World. In addition, all of the strands of Protestantism that eventuated in the radicalism of the early nineteenth century were anti-Calvinist: they rejected the idea that human beings are intrinsically depraved, affirmed free will, and even proclaimed that all people would be saved and could live even now without sin. This “universalism” and “perfectionism” is expressed, for example, in Emerson’s premonitions of a transformed or perfected humanity. Indeed, Emerson and the Grimké sisters eventually withdrew from Unitarianism and Quakerism, respectively, in large measure because even these otherwise “liberal” denominations compromised individual responsibility for one’s conduct in relation to God and fellow human beings.

A second impetus for, or element of, the basic convictions of this group of reformers was Christian non-resistance or pacifism as articulated in exemplary ways by Lucretia Mott, Samuel J. May, the Grimkés, William Lloyd Garrison, and Adin Ballou, and others whose works directly influenced Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King. As absolute pacifists, these figures drew the direct conclusion that government that rests on force (a category comprising all the world’s states) is intrinsically immoral, even as their position precluded any forcible resistance to it. Many of these figures were anarchists in the sense that they opposed all state power as morally illegitimate.

The most important and immediate source of their anti-authoritarianism, however, was anti-slavery, which was the fundamental moral driver of the entire enterprise. The American abolitionist movement in its immediatist varieties—immediatism being the view that slavery should be ended immediately rather than by means of a gradual process (for example, one in which slave-owners would be compensated)—came to see ownership of persons as a violation of nature and nature’s God, regarding human evil in general as the attempt to enslave or to claim ownership over persons. They condemned capitalism, war, marriage, and government as these existed in their time on precisely the same grounds: all of them rest on coercion, and coercion amounts

to a claim to own other people by annexing their time, energy, and very lives to purposes that are not their own. Abolitionism is the lens through which these figures viewed all political and economic questions, taking Protestant spiritual individualism out of the church community and channeling it into a movement to reform society in every aspect.

In a letter to his wife, the abolitionist and feminist Angelina Grimké, Theodore Dwight Weld summed up the ethos of these figures as follows:

No condition of birth, no shade of color, no mere misfortune of circumstances, can annul that birth-right charter, which God has bequeathed to every being upon whom he has stamped his own image, by making him a *free moral agent*, and ... he who robs his fellow man of this tramples upon right, subverts justice, outrages humanity, unsettles the foundation of human safety, and sacrilegiously assumes the prerogative of God.<sup>3</sup>

Weld defined slavery, which he regarded as the essence and acme of human evil, as "*Holding & treating persons as things.*" Lucretia Mott formulated the general moral principle of abolitionism in a particularly clear way: "Every man has a right to his own body."<sup>4</sup> Maria Weston Chapman wrote that "the anti-slavery cause [is] one, with regard to which *all human beings*, whether men or women, citizens or foreigners, white or colored, [have] *the same duties and the same rights.*"<sup>5</sup> Anti-slavery, in short, became an entire political orientation: the meaning of the term "slavery" was broadened—to some extent metaphorically but also literally—to include any coercive authority. In this way "anti-slavery" came to signify anti-authoritarianism in general. As Mott said at a women's rights convention in 1853, "It is always unsafe to invest man with power over his fellow being ... *Call no man master*—that is the true doctrine."<sup>6</sup>

Many of these figures took anti-statism to follow directly from non-resistance. Exemplary in this aspect are William Lloyd Garrison and his associate Henry Clarke Wright, Sarah Grimké, Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, Adin Ballou, Bronson Alcott, and Lucretia Mott. Garrison's extraordinary "Declaration of Sentiments Adopted by the Peace Convention" expressed the consensus of the

3 Quoted in L. Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973), 512.

4 Lucretia Mott, "Law of Progress," in *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Sermons and Speeches*, ed. D. Greene (New York: Edward Mellen Press, 1980), 73–74.

5 Maria Weston Chapman, *Right and Wrong in Massachusetts* (Boston: Dow & Jackson's Anti-slavery Press, 1839), 26.

6 Lucretia Mott, "The Laws in Relation to Women," in *Complete Sermons and Speeches*, 218.

first great interdenominational meeting of American non-resistants, which was held in Boston in 1838:

We cannot acknowledge allegiance to any human government; neither can we oppose any such government by a resort to physical force. We recognize but one King and Lawgiver, one Judge and Ruler of mankind. We are bound by the laws of a kingdom which is not of this world; the subjects of which are forbidden to fight ... which has no state lines, no national partitions, no geographical boundaries; in which there is no distinction of rank, or division of caste, or inequality of sex ... As every human government is upheld by physical strength, and its laws are enforced virtually at the point of the bayonet, we cannot hold any office which imposes upon its incumbent the obligation to compel men to do right, on pain of imprisonment or death. We therefore voluntarily exclude ourselves from every legislative and judicial body, and repudiate all human politics, worldly honors, and stations of authority.<sup>7</sup>

Tolstoy quoted the Declaration of Sentiments in its entirety in his fundamental statement of modern pacifism and religious anarchism *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which was itself an important text for Gandhi and King.

All of these figures, including Garrison, arrived at their pacifism, at least in part, through abolitionism. They regarded these positions as mutually entailed, or as belonging to a single interlocking system. In this regard Lucretia Mott was as anarchistic as Garrison: "We see many giving up their undue attachment to political parties and governments, giving up their constitutional veneration and refusing to have any lot or part in a government and constitution which are based upon the sword, the ultimate resort of which is the destroying weapon."<sup>8</sup>

As the first American feminists, Mott and other women of this circle were noteworthy for insisting on their right to full public participation in the debates of the day, even as their male compatriots—particularly Weld and Garrison—were remarkable for their anti-sexism. Like other radical feminists, Mott struggled to make her anarchism compatible with advocacy of women's suffrage:

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7 William Lloyd Garrison, "Declaration of Sentiments," *The Liberator* (28 Dec. 1838), 3, <http://fair-use.org/theliberator/1838/09/28/declaration-of-sentiments-adopted-by-the-peace-convention>.

8 Lucretia Mott, "Quarterly Meetings, No Ordinary Occasions," in *Complete Speeches and Sermons*, 139.

Far be it from me to encourage woman to vote, or to take an active part in politics, in the present state of our government. Her right to the elective franchise however, is the same, and should be yielded to her, whether she exercise that right or not. Would that man too, would have no participation in a government based upon the life-taking principle—upon retaliation and the sword. It is unworthy a Christian nation. But when, in the diffusion of light and intelligence, a convention shall be called to make regulations for self-government on Christian, non-resistant principles, I can see no good reason, why woman should not participate in such an assemblage, taking part equally with man.<sup>9</sup>

Many of these figures also adopted explicitly anti-capitalist sentiments, extending the idea of slavery to the buying and selling of labor in emerging industrial capitalism. As Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, the New Hampshire publisher of the abolitionist paper *The Herald of Freedom*, wrote in 1845:

The overthrow of Slavery must involve the doing away [also] of the oppressions practiced by these institutions on the white poor. White Labor is all but enslaved among us. It is the slave of Capital. Capital buys it at auction. The capitalist bids off the bones and sinews of Labor ... It is impossible for Labor to get rich or free. I mean Labor generally. The institutions of capital will exhaust Labor's means, and keep it down. The black laborer it enslaves outright in this country. The means of abolishing slavery must be employed in opening the eyes of the people to these tyrant Institutions. Anti-Slavery tells the truth about them.<sup>10</sup>

By "these tyrant Institutions," Rogers meant not only chattel slavery but also government, capital, and the subordination of women and even of animals.

### Feminism, the Secularization of Abolitionism, and Josiah Warren

One way to frame the anarchism of these figures—as they themselves did—is in terms of their refusal to recognize any human government before the authority of God. Later European and European-influenced anarchism, in contrast,

9 Lucretia Mott, "Discourse on Woman," in *Complete Sermons and Speeches*, 156.

10 Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, "The Anti-Slavery Movement," in *A Collection from the Newspaper Writings of Nathaniel Peabody Rogers*, ed. J. Pierpont (Concord, N.H.: J.R. French, 1847), 308.

was militantly atheistic, taking up Bakunin's slogan "no gods, no masters." Even in the United States, the views characteristic of Mott or Garrison were quickly secularized or else appeared contemporaneously in secularized versions. For example, Sarah Grimké condemns patriarchy on the same grounds as slavery in her pioneering feminist text *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*:

The cupidity of man soon led him to regard woman as property, and hence we find them sold to those who wished to marry them, as far as appears, without any regard to those sacred rights which belong to woman, as well as to man in the choice of a companion ...<sup>11</sup> I am persuaded that the rights of woman, like the rights of slaves, need only be examined to be understood and asserted.<sup>12</sup>

Though Mott's and the Grimkés' feminism had a strongly religious flavor, they easily made common cause with more secularized feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who also drew upon their work. Margaret Fuller secularized and transcendentalized Mott's and the Grimkés' Quaker feminism but retained entire the individualism; her position was precisely that contemporary marriage and other forms of hierarchical gender relations were violations of individual self-ownership, which demanded to be respected in each woman as in each man.

The idea of self-sovereignty or self-ownership, derived from anti-slavery, was fundamental to the thought of Josiah Warren, who in the 1820s and 1830s adopted the individualism of the most radical Protestants and drew the same anti-statist and anti-capitalist conclusions without appealing to God or scripture.<sup>13</sup> Warren was arguably the first secular American anarchist as well as the first person in the United States and possibly the world to produce an anarchist periodical (*The Peaceful Revolutionist*, 1833).<sup>14</sup> Warren focused primarily on economics in the context of the emerging capitalist economy; he detested the profit motive and tried to set up working economies that deleted it. By the

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11 Sarah Grimké, "Letter II: Woman Subject Only To God," in *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman Addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), 13.

12 Sarah Grimké, "Letter III: The Pastoral Letter of the General Association of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts," in *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*, 14.

13 For detailed discussions of Warren, see Kevin Carson's and Roderick Long's chapters in this volume.

14 For excerpts from *The Peaceful Revolutionist*, see *The Practical Anarchist: Writings of Josiah Warren*, ed. C. Sartwell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 99–123.

1860s he was an important figure in early attempts to organize labor in the response to the rise of industrial capitalism.

Warren's basic political concept, again, was "self-sovereignty," which he opposed precisely to slavery: no one can own another because each person is the owner of herself. This discourse derives from the religious anti-slavery of the era, as when Sarah Grimké described a slave's attempted escape as a resolution to "take possession of himself."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Angelina Grimké wrote that "[t]he great fundamental principle of Abolitionism is that man cannot rightfully hold his fellow man as property. Therefore, we affirm that *every slave-holder is a man-stealer*. We do so for the following reason: to steal a man is to rob him of himself."<sup>16</sup>

Like Garrison and Mott, as well as Emerson and Thoreau, Warren was a radical individualist whose principal concern was "The Study of Individuality, or the practice of mentally discriminating, dividing, separating, or disconnecting persons, things, and events, according to their individual peculiarities."<sup>17</sup> His ideal communities—including Utopia in Ohio (founded in 1847) and Modern Times on Long Island (founded in 1851)—had some success because Warren's vision of how social living might be arranged was realistic, grounded in the basic skills and trades it took to keep people alive. Warren always concentrated on the circulation of staple goods, improvement of standards of living, technological development, and pride in individual ownership. And yet there was to be no accumulation of capital or profit because business would be conducted according to Warren's "cost principle," which claimed that the price of goods was to be fixed not by what they would bring, but what they cost in labor to produce.

This is obviously a bold conclusion in the face of classical capitalist economics. It is also strikingly simple as an economic law. According to Warren, the alternative—that demand fixes price—is morally and politically repellant because it explicitly authorizes blackmail and coercion. Applying a *reductio ad absurdum* to the law of supply and demand, Warren asks: "what is the value of a glass of water to a man dying of thirst?" The answer, of course, is "everything he has." It would be contrary to self-interest, the supposed essence of all human motivation, not to take it all.<sup>18</sup> People occasionally do take everything

15 Sarah Grimké, "An Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States," in *American Anti-Slavery Writings*, ed. J.G. Basker (New York: Library of America, 2012), 351.

16 Angelina Grimké, *Letters to Catherine E. Beecher in Reply to an Essay on Slavery and Abolition* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), 4.

17 Josiah Warren, "Equitable Commerce," in *The Practical Anarchist*, 56.

18 *Ibid.*, 67–68.

that someone else has, justifying themselves by the supposed law that price is fixed by demand and the corollary of debt at interest, which treats money itself as a commodity. But should—or must—they?

At the macroscopic scale, the capitalist works on fleecing one or another segment of the economy, alternately underselling to destroy competitors and inflating prices to exploit local monopolies; prices are entirely capricious, speculation rests on price fluctuations and exacerbates them; economic crises result, and so on. This, of course, recalls Marx's analysis of capitalism, the common strand between Warren and Marx being expressed in Robert Owen's socialism. In addition, both Warren and Marx endorsed the labor theory of value, which Warren tried to apply practically by adopting "labor notes"—a currency which values goods in terms of hours of labor—as the "circulating medium."

For Warren, the profit motive devours people and the economy. It is an indulgence in greed, not a natural condition of human beings. Speculation and lending at interest occur at every stage in the circulation of goods in a capitalist economy, and each person's greed provides a motivation and justification for everyone else's. By the time a commodity arrives at use, it has layers of inflated and imaginary costs associated with it, and because one needs the wherewithal to obtain it, one must seek to maximize profits from all activities. Great accumulations of useless wealth coexist with grinding poverty, homelessness, starvation, and exploitation. In a rational system where price is fixed by cost or value measured in labor, a modest industriousness would be enough, according to Warren, to provide each person with what she needs, and then some.

### From the Government of God to Transcendentalism

Like Warren, Emerson and Thoreau are exemplary figures in the secularization of the ideas of American religious radicalism. Emerson's evolution from Unitarian minister to beloved universal sage brought versions of all these ideas before the American public—perhaps not always in their most radical iterations, though Emerson's individualism is as extreme as anyone's. It would not be accurate to refer to Emerson and Thoreau simply as "atheists," however, since they maintained various stances that might be considered "spiritual" (they were both interested in Eastern religions, for example, and occasionally expressed ideas that could be described as pantheistic). They connected free individuality to Nature rather than to God (though surprisingly often also to God), and they retained from their post-Calvinist Protestantism a premonition of the perfection of every person and of society. Emerson intermittently and

Thoreau consistently adopted the anti-statism of previous and contemporary radicals as well.

In his classic essay "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau endorses both Garrison's "immediatism" as well as his "disunionism"—the most radical varieties of abolitionism that existed in the 1830s and 40s.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectively withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.<sup>19</sup>

Both Garrison's immediatism and his secessionism constituted a spiritual stance: withdraw from sin; stop sinning immediately; you and the world can be transformed in a twinkling: all you have to do is actually want it. Thoreau pursued the line of thoughts, but without the explicitly Christian motivating force.

Lucretia Mott's influence on Thoreau was direct. Indeed, the passage above is practically a verbatim expression of what she had been arguing for decades. Upon hearing Mott preach in 1843, Thoreau wrote the following to his sister:

I believe I have not told you about Lucretia Mott. It was a good while ago I heard her at the Quaker Church in Hester St. She is a preacher, and it was advertised that she would be present on that day. I liked all the proceedings very well ... At length, after a long silence, waiting for the spirit, Mrs. Mott rose, took off her bonnet, and began to utter very deliberately what the spirit suggested. Her self-possession was something to say [remark on], if all else failed—but it did not. Her subject was the abuse of the Bible—and thence she straightaway digressed to slavery and the degradation of woman. It was a good speech—transcendentalism in its mildest form.<sup>20</sup>

19 Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," in *Thoreau: Collected Essays and Poems*, ed. E.H. Witherell (New York: Library of America, 2001), 212.

20 Henry David Thoreau, *The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau*, eds. W. Harding and C. Bode (New York: New York University Press, 1958), 128.



"Mildest," here, is used in a somewhat Christian, lamb-of-God-type sense, as there is no doubt that Mott's preaching was fierce; we have a fair example of this in what Thoreau heard in her sermon of the same year "Righteousness Gives Strength to its Possessor."<sup>21</sup> But it is certainly significant that he regards her as expressing transcendentalism throughout. In fact, there is some evidence that Mott influenced the development of transcendentalism rather than, or in addition to, the other way around. In a letter from 1858, for example, Mott describes a conversation she had with Emerson after listening to his lecture "The Law of Success." Emerson evidently told her, "I got some leaves out of yr. book."<sup>22</sup>

In "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau writes:

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too.

Thoreau's notion that we have an obligation not to participate in evil is drawn from the conscientious objection of Anabaptists and other religious groups, as well as from the Free Produce movement (to which Mott belonged) that had been launched by Quakers in the eighteenth century. The latter, which advocated refraining from buying or selling goods made by slave labor, was at once a consumer boycott and a divestment from the slave economy that embodied the particular individualist vision common to both Mott and Thoreau.

Although Emerson and Thoreau were non-joiners who often maintained a wry distance from reform movements, these movements nonetheless exerted a profound influence on their political views. Emerson expresses his admiration for Garrison in a number of journal entries, noting upon meeting Garrison that he "... cannot speak of that gentleman without respect."<sup>23</sup> Of "the principle of non resistance" he says, "Trust it. Give up the Government without too solicitously inquiring whether roads can be still built, letters carried, & title deeds

<sup>21</sup> Mott, *Complete Speeches and Sermons*, 35–52.

<sup>22</sup> Lucretia Mott, *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, ed. Beverly Wilson Palmer (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 283.

<sup>23</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Emerson: Selected Journals 1841–1877*, 2 vols, ed. L. Rosenwald (New York: Library of America, 2010), vol. 2, 237.

secured when the government of force is at an end.”<sup>24</sup> That is, he immediately associates non-resistance with anti-statism, a connection that appeared obvious to many of these figures. Like Thoreau, Emerson was a witness to Mott’s preaching; he praises her courage and says “she makes every bully ashamed.”<sup>25</sup>

Adin Ballou, too, drew an explicit connection between the spiritual and the political:

With us, at present, perfect individuality is a fundamental idea of the true man. We believe that by setting the individual right with his Creator, we shall set social relationships right. We therefore go for unabridged independence of mind, conscience, duty, and responsibility; for direct divine government over the human soul; and, of course, for as little human government as possible. We wish to know whether there is any such thing as man’s being and doing right from the law of God written on his heart, without the aid of external bonds and restraints.<sup>26</sup>

Ballou began his career as a Universalist minister and eventually founded a community of eccentric Christians at Hopedale, Massachusetts. Warren was a deist or perhaps an atheist who took no counsel from anyone or anything outside of this world. Thoreau was a naturalist in both a scientific and a spiritual sense. But all were radical individualists who advocated radical reforms of various sorts on that basis.

In his essay “New England Reformers” and in his later reminiscences, Emerson always associated the character of the reformers, no less than the reform efforts themselves, with individualism:

In politics, for example, it is easy to see the progress of dissent. The country is full of rebellion; the country is full of kings. Hands off! Let there be no control and no interference in the administration of the affairs of this kingdom of me ... I confess, the motto of the *Globe* newspaper is so attractive to me, that I can seldom find much appetite to read what is below it in its columns, “The world is governed too much.” So the country is frequently affording solitary examples of resistance to the government, solitary nullifiers [Thoreau and Alcott, for example, who refused to pay taxes during the Mexican War], who throw themselves on their reserved

24 Ibid., vol. 1, 711.

25 Emerson, *Selected Journals*, vol. 2, 508–509.

26 Quoted in V. Ziegler, *The Advocates of Peace in Antebellum America* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992), 72.

rights; nay, who have reserved all their rights; who reply to the assessor, and to the clerk of court, that they do not know the State; and embarrass the courts of law, by non-juring, and the commander-in-chief of the militia, by non-resistance.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, however, Emerson and his peers viewed individualism as essential to a real social harmony:

Each man, if he attempts to join himself to others, is on all sides cramped and diminished of his proportion; and the stricter the union, the smaller and the more pitiful he is. But leave him alone, to recognize in every hour and place the secret soul, he will go up and down doing the works of a true member, and, to the astonishment of all, the work will be done by concert, though no man spoke. Government will be adamant without any governor. The union must be ideal in actual individualism ... And as a man is equal to the church, and equal to the state, so he is equal to every other man.<sup>28</sup>

Elsewhere he writes:

Wild liberty develops iron conscience. Want of liberty, by strengthening law and decorum, stupefies conscience ... Every man's nature is sufficient advertisement to him of the character of his fellows. My right and wrong, is their right and wrong. Whilst I do what is fit for me, and abstain from what is unfit, my neighbor and I shall often agree in our means, and work together for a time to one end. But whenever I find my dominion over myself not sufficient for me, and undertake the direction of him also, I overstep the truth, and come into false relations to him. I may have so much more skill or strength than he, that he cannot express adequately his sense of wrong, but it is a lie, and hurts like a lie both him and me. Love and nature cannot maintain the assumption: it must be executed by a practical lie, namely, by force. This undertaking for another is the blunder which stands in colossal ugliness in the governments of the world. It is the same thing in numbers, as in a pair, only not quite so intelligible. I can see well enough the great difference between my setting myself down to a self-control, and my going to make somebody else act after my views:

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27 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "New England Reformers," in *Emerson: Essays and Lectures*, ed. J. Porte (New York: Library of America, 1983), 593.

28 *Ibid.*, 599.

but when a quarter of the human race assume to tell me what I must do, I may be too much disturbed by the circumstances to see so clearly the absurdity of their command. Therefore, all public ends look vague and quixotic beside private ones. For, any laws but those which men make for themselves, are laughable ... Hence, the less government we have, the better—the fewer laws, and the less confided power.<sup>29</sup>

That Emerson was influenced during this period by Garrison's non-resistance and anarchism is evident from his journals. With the possible exception of his defense of John Brown, this is as radical as Emerson's public politics ever became.

### Individualist Anarchism in Economics and Political Philosophy<sup>30</sup>

William Batchelder Greene was both an army officer and a Unitarian minister at different times and had lived at the tiny transcendentalist (later Fourierist) community at Brook Farm. He was one of the first Americans to be explicitly influenced by European anarchism; indeed, one may understand the proposals outlined in his book *Mutual Banking* as an attempt to combine and make practical the economic ideas of Warren and Proudhon, which, though arrived at independently, were strikingly similar in certain respects. In some ways, Greene's proposals for cooperative banking resemble the contemporary credit union.

Ezra Heywood also tried to systematize Warren's work on economics, currency, and credit in the 1860s and 1870s. By the late 1860s, a nascent radical labor movement had sprung up in New England in which Warren, Heywood, and Greene were all active. They agitated for an eight-hour workday, improvement in industrial working conditions, limits on child labor, and many other reforms. Warren often framed the economic problem in terms of how the laborer could acquire the just reward of his labor, since labor was the source of all wealth. By the late 1860s such figures were articulating class-based economic and social analyses, condemning the accumulation of capital, and advocating the strike as a means to address the inequities of wage slavery and class inequality (though there is no evidence of a direct influence from Marx for another decade). As Heywood writes:

29 Emerson, "Politics," in *Essays and Lectures*, 565–569.

30 For a detailed discussion of American individualist anarchism, see Kevin Carson's and Roderick Long's chapters in this volume.

I know it is replied to all this that capital exercises no real tyranny or extortion, because labor is free to accept or reject the terms offered. But labor is not free; it drags a little longer chain than of old, but it is as really chained by conditions and circumstances most of which capital has the creating and control of. Controlling land, machinery, steam, waterfalls, ships, railways, public opinion, and especially money, capital is master of the situation, can bide its time, and starve labor into submission. The fact is so clearly apparent to intelligent and unbiased observers, that argument would be superfluous were there not eminent men who gravely assert that there is no tyranny of capital in America! Strikes are in progress everywhere, yet the newspapers quietly acquiesce, because it is capital striking *down* wages ... But if labor, obedient to a sterner necessity, to gain an extra crust, for famishing ones at home, demands more pay, the air swarms with "strike," "dictation," "force," "riot," "insurrection," and so many other epithets of rebuke flying about, that one would think himself among the slave-pens, whips and plantation overseers, did not the equal sky of New England cover him. The lash is indeed out of fashion; but ghastly specters of want gathering around labor's hearth-stone, are surer means of coercion!<sup>31</sup>

Heywood, too, had begun his participation in radical politics as an abolitionist, and the comparison of industrial capitalism to slavery only became more pointed after the Civil War. By the late 1870s, Heywood was calling for a general strike and inveighing against the robber barons, equating capital to robbery, quoting the proceedings of the International, and praising the Paris Commune.<sup>32</sup>

Though connected on one end to radical abolitionism and on the other to Benjamin Tucker and nascent egoism, Lysander Spooner is a unique figure in the history of anarchism. A brilliant legal mind, he attacked the licensing procedures for lawyers in Massachusetts and founded a private postal service, which at the time was deemed illegal. Garrison had asserted that the Constitution countenanced slavery and hence was "a pact with the devil" (he burned copies of it in public speeches), but Spooner—who was also a religious skeptic—argued in the 1850s that slavery was plainly unconstitutional, violating many provisions of the Bill of Rights, for example. Unlike Garrison, Warren, and Thoreau, Spooner's individualism was of the "classical liberal" variety, and

31 Ezra Heywood, "The Labor Party ... What Workingmen Want," in *The Collected Works of Ezra Heywood*, ed. M. Blatt (Weston, Mass.: M&S Press, 1985), 39.

32 See Ezra Heywood, "The Great Strike," in *The Collected Works of Ezra Heywood*, 171–193.

he hung everything on Lockean individual rights. He was one of the few figures to extend the logic of democratic liberalism all the way to anarchy, though Thomas Paine had occasionally edged in this direction as well.

The fundamental classical liberal argument for the legitimacy of state power is social contract theory. Working from within that tradition itself, Spooner argued that, if one starts with natural rights (as Locke does, for instance), social contract theory does not provide a plausible argument for the moral legitimacy of state power. He formulated the point in many texts—for example, in *No Treason*, in which he defends the right of people to revolt. Furthermore, he argued that the Constitution was not a valid social contract because women and African-Americans, among others, had not been consulted in its drafting and ratification:

Thus the whole Revolution turned upon, asserted, and, in theory, established, the right of each and every man, at his discretion, to release himself from the support of the government under which he had lived. And this principle was asserted, not as a right peculiar to themselves, or to that time, or as applicable only to the government then existing; but as a universal right of all men, at all times, and under all circumstances.<sup>33</sup> The agreement is a simple one, like any other agreement. It is the same as one that should say: We, the people of the town of A----, agree to sustain a church, a school, a hospital, or a theatre, for ourselves and our children. Such an agreement clearly could have no validity, except as between those who actually consented to it. If a portion only of “the people of the town of A----,” should assent to this contract, and should then proceed to compel contributions of money or service from those who had not consented, they would be mere robbers; and would deserve to be treated as such. The number who actually consented to the Constitution of the United States, at the first, was very small. Considered as the act of the whole people, the adoption of the Constitution was the merest farce and imposture, binding upon nobody. The women, children, and blacks, of course, were not asked to give their consent. In addition to this, there were, in nearly or quite all the States, property qualifications that excluded probably one half, two thirds, or perhaps even three fourths, of the white male adults from the right of suffrage. And of those who were allowed that right, we know not how many exercised it ... Furthermore, those who originally agreed to the Constitution, could thereby bind nobody that

33 Lysander Spooner, “No Treason, No. 1” [1867] in *The Lysander Spooner Reader*, ed. G.H. Smith (San Francisco: Fox and Wilkes, 1992), 63.

should come after them. They could contract for nobody but themselves. They had no more natural right or power to make political contracts, binding upon succeeding generations, than they had to make marriage or business contracts binding upon them.<sup>34</sup>

In his text *Vices are Not Crimes*, Spooner argued, even more strongly than John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty*, against all prohibitions on alcohol and drugs, or against any law restricting private individual behavior.

Benjamin Tucker started as a follower of Warren, Greene, Spooner, and Heywood, all of whom he knew as a young man. Tucker's journal *Liberty* was the dominant American anarchist periodical of the late nineteenth century. By the 1880s, Tucker had immersed himself in European as well as American anarchism and was referring to himself as an individualist anarchist, and referring to Marx's position as "authoritarian socialism."<sup>35</sup> Tucker's translation of Proudhon's *What Is Property?* appeared in 1877 and 1878, and he eventually translated Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own* and Bakunin's *God and the State* as well. These volumes helped introduce European anarchism to American audiences. Tucker's own anarchism became more and more identified with Stirner's egoism, though he was a strong critic of capitalism and of the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer and others. Of Stirner's work, he said, "Read by only a few scholars, the book is buried in obscurity, but is destined to a resurrection that perhaps will mark an epoch."<sup>36</sup> *Liberty's* masthead featured Proudhon's aphorism "Liberty, Not the Daughter, but the Mother of Order," and Tucker dedicated the compendium of his writings *Instead of a Book* "to the memory of my old friend and master Josiah Warren, whose teachings were my first source of light."

### Free Love and Feminism

Stephen Pearl Andrews helped Warren wrestle his basic text *Equitable Commerce* into shape and co-founded with him the community of Modern Times on Long Island. By the 1850s, American reform movements such as abolitionism and feminism had developed in relation to intellectual and popular

34 Lysander Spooner, "No Treason, No. 2" [1867], in *The Lysander Spooner Reader*, 62–66.

35 Benjamin Tucker, *Instead of a Book: By a Man Too Busy to Write One* [1893] (New York: Gordon Press, 1972), 40.

36 *Ibid.*, 24.

fashions such as spiritualism and “free love” which critiqued Christianity and the traditional family, respectively. Modern Times, which usually had about a hundred residents, persisted from 1851 to 1864 or so, when it went underground as Brentwood. Lots were sold on the cost principle, so land was notably inexpensive, and New York City was accessible by rail. Moncure Daniel Conway, who visited Modern Times in 1858, said that he wasn’t sure whether to travel to the individualist utopia “by railway or by rainbow.”<sup>37</sup> Warren stated the purpose of the community in a somewhat more down-to-earth manner: “If we do not secure homes to the homeless, we work to no purpose.”<sup>38</sup>

Among Modern Times’s residents were Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Grove Nichols, both of whom were advocates of free love, plural marriage, and sex education (though they later converted to Roman Catholicism). It is worth noting that many of the American ideal communities—including the Shakers, the Rappites, the Mormons, and John Humphrey Noyes’s Oneida—experimented with various alternatives to “traditional” marriage and family relations. The matter did not escape their determination to rebuild society on an entirely new basis. Andrews drew sensational attention to Modern Times when he engaged in an extended debate on the topic of free love with Henry James, Sr. and Horace Greeley in Greeley’s *New York Tribune* in 1853. Andrews was an activist in this cause. He was thoroughly committed to allowing people to live as they pleased, but he nonetheless believed that a few disastrous experiments would demonstrate the problems of the whole idea.

American anti-authoritarianism, as we have seen, emerged together with the first wave of American feminism, and by the 1860s and 1870s it coincided (as at Modern Times) with the free love movement as well. The latter argued for a positive and unrepressed approach to human sexuality, sexual freedom for men and women—sometimes including homosexuality—and the dissemination of information about birth control and all matters of sexual physiology. As was already traditional by that point, a number of figures argued that marriage as constituted by church and state amounted to the ownership of women by men.

Stephen Pearl Andrews collaborated with Victoria Woodhull (the first woman to make a run at the presidency) and her sister Tennessee Claflin to advocate for sexual equality and freedom in *Woodhull and Claflin’s Weekly*.

37 Quoted in R. Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times*, New York (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 12.

38 Quoted in Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times* *ibid.*, 47.



Ezra Heywood and his partner Angela Tilton Heywood did much of the same in their periodical *The Word*. Angela Heywood in particular wrote about such matters in a remarkably liberated way, presenting an extremely early version of what has since been termed “sex-positive feminism”: “Man and woman, you and I meet, embrace, melt away in each other, only to reappear as Persons with new vigor, again and again in everlasting frolic.”<sup>39</sup> Influenced by Warren, she related access to birth control to women’s self-sovereignty and termed the pervasive sexism of her time “heism”:

The combat deepens; invasive heism, arbitrary repressive ecclesiasticism which hitherto have *subjected* woman to man’s desires now find her insurgent. Woman’s Rights, declared by Mrs. Stanton, Lucretia Mott & others at Seneca Falls, N.Y., 1848 ... are realized in woman’s growing impulse to be *mistress of her own person*; in the arrival of Natural Equality of the sexes in social relations.... Now not books merely but a Syringe [a birth control device] is in the fight; *the will of man to impose vs. the Right of Woman to prevent conception is the issue*. The giddy, evasive ways, in which the sexes have, hitherto, met must turn to serious facing of facts. Does not Nature give *to* woman & install *in* her the right of way to & from her own womb? ... Shall we submit to the loathsome impertinence which makes Anthony Comstock inspector and supervisor of American women’s wombs? [Birth control] is to the North what the Negro question was to the South.<sup>40</sup>

Moses Harman’s periodical *Lucifer The Light-Bearer*, published from 1883 to 1907 in Kansas and Chicago, disseminated sexual information and dedicated itself specifically to the sexual liberation of women. Both *The Word* and *Lucifer* were seized under the Comstock Act, which prohibited the distribution of sexual information, including information about birth control, by the mails. *Lucifer* was prosecuted specifically for condemning forced sex in marriage as rape. Indeed, both Ezra Heywood and Moses Harman were imprisoned under the Act and condemned to hard labor. The essence of the free love movement was expressed later by Emma Goldman, in her autobiography *Living My Life*, in response to her miserable marriage as a young woman: “If I ever love a man

39 Quoted in W. McElroy, *Individualist Feminism of the Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2001), 39.

40 Quoted in McElroy, *Individualist Feminism of the Nineteenth Century* *ibid.*, 43–44.

again, I will give myself to him without being bound by rabbi or the law, and when that love dies, I will leave without permission."<sup>41</sup>

### Transition: Industrialism, Labor, and Communist Anarchism

A contributor to Tucker's *Liberty*, Voltairine de Cleyre was raised in extreme poverty and spent her early years in a convent in Michigan, though she quickly became a religious skeptic (or, in the parlance of the time, a "freethinker"). Like Emma Goldman, de Cleyre became committed to anarchism after the Haymarket events in 1886 and their aftermath. During a demonstration of workers in favor of an eight-hour workday at Haymarket Square in Chicago, someone threw a bomb at police; in the explosion and ensuing chaos, seven policemen and four demonstrators were killed. Despite lack of evidence of direct involvement, eight men—all of them anarchists or socialists—were arrested and seven sentenced to death. Four were executed, and Louis Lingg committed suicide in prison. De Cleyre's lover Dyer Lum smuggled in the blasting cap by which he did so.

De Cleyre connected her anarchism to Thoreau, Emerson, and Paine, declaring at one point, in a defense of Emma Goldman following the latter's arrest for inciting to riot in 1893, that "Miss Goldmann [sic] is a communist; I am an individualist. She wishes to destroy the right of property, I wish to assert it."<sup>42</sup> As the century turned, however, de Cleyre began to make common cause with the communist anarchism of Goldman and her compatriot Alexander Berkman, regarding the anarchist movement more and more as an international proletarian revolution. She referred to herself as "an anarchist without adjectives," holding that when the state had been destroyed, people might try many economic arrangements, from Warren's or Proudhon's mutualism to Kropotkin's and Goldman's communism.

Nevertheless, she also rejected Marxist-style materialism and economic determinism, very much on an Emersonian or transcendentalist basis. In her essay "Crime and Punishment," de Cleyre gives both an anarchist and a transcendentalist account of these matters, explicitly referring to Emerson as a "spiritual anarchist":

<sup>41</sup> Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* [1931] (New York: Dover, 1970), 36.

<sup>42</sup> Voltairine de Cleyre, "In Defense of Emma Goldman," in *Exquisite Rebel: The Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre*, eds. S. Presley and C. Sartwell (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2005), 156.

A great ethical teacher once wrote words like unto these: "I have within me the capacity for every crime." ... Few, reading them, believe that he meant what he said. Most take it as the sententious utterance of one who, in an abandonment of generosity, wished to say something large and leveling. But I think he meant exactly what he said. I think that with all his purity Emerson had within him the turbid stream of passion and desire; for all his hard-cut granite features he knew the instincts of the weakling and the slave; and for all the sweetness, the tenderness, and the nobility of his nature, he had the tiger and the jackal in his soul. I think that within every bit of human flesh and spirit that has ever crossed the enigma bridge of life, from the prehistoric racial morning until now, all crime and all virtue were germinal. Out of one great soul-stuff are we sprung, you and I and all of us; and if in you the virtue has grown and not the vice, do not therefore conclude that you are essentially different from him whom you have helped to put in stripes and behind bars. Your balance may be more even, you may be mixed in smaller proportions altogether, or the outside temptation has not come upon you ... Ask yourselves, each of you, whether you are quite sure that you have feeling enough, understanding enough, and *have you suffered* enough, to be able to weigh and measure out another man's life or liberty, no matter what he has done?<sup>43</sup>

De Cleyre was also a radical feminist who connected her ideas not only to the contemporary feminism of figures such as Goldman, but also to the earlier tradition of Mott and Stanton and the free love movement of Woodhull, Andrews, the Heywoods, and Harman, whose imprisonment under the Comstock laws she condemned in her 1890 essay "Sex Slavery":

That is adultery, where woman submits herself sexually to man, without desire on her part.... And that is rape, where a man forces himself sexually upon a woman whether he is licensed by the marriage law to do it or not. And that is the vilest of all tyranny where a man compels the woman he says he loves, to endure the agony of bearing children that she does not want, and for whom, as is the rule rather than the exception, they cannot properly provide.<sup>44</sup>

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43 Voltairine de Cleyre, "Crime and Punishment," in *Exquisite Rebel*, 129–30.

44 Voltairine de Cleyre, "Sex Slavery," in *Exquisite Rebel*, 229.

Comparing the oppression of women to slavery, she adds: "The question of souls is old—we demand our bodies, now."<sup>45</sup> By the end of the century, and following the events at Haymarket and their aftermath, the communist anarchism of Bakunin and Kropotkin—in the interpretation and application of such figures as Johann Most, Emma Goldman, and Alexander Berkman—had become the dominant strand of American anarchism and one of the major elements of the radical American labor movement in the context of fully industrial capitalism and mass immigration. Until its repression at the beginning of the First World War, it was the main alternative to Marxism, which the anarchists referred to as "authoritarian socialism."

Goldman, too, related her anarchism to Emerson and other figures in the American tradition, summarizing her views as follows:

"The one thing of value in the world," says Emerson, "is the active soul; this every man contains within him. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth and creates."<sup>46</sup> In other words, the individual instinct is the thing of value in the world. It is the true soul that sees and creates the truth alive, out of which is to come a still greater truth, the re-born social soul ... Anarchism is the great liberator of man from the phantoms that have held him captive; it is the arbiter and pacifier of the two forces for individual and social harmony. To accomplish that unity, Anarchism has declared war on the pernicious influences which have so far prevented the harmonious blending of individual and social instincts, the individual and society ... Religion, the dominion of the human mind; Property, the dominion of human needs; and Government, the dominion of human conduct, represent the stronghold of man's enslavement and all the horrors it entails. Religion! How it dominates man's mind, how it humiliates and degrades his soul. God is everything, man is nothing, says religion. But out of that nothing God has created a kingdom so despotic, so tyrannical, so cruel, so terribly exacting that naught but gloom and tears and blood have ruled the world since gods began. Anarchism rouses man to rebellion against this black monster. Break your mental fetters, says Anarchism to man, for not until you think and judge for yourself will you get rid of the dominion of darkness, the greatest obstacle to all progress ... Property, the dominion of man's needs, the denial of the right to satisfy his needs. Time was when property claimed a divine right, when it came to man with the same refrain, even as religion, "Sacrifice! Abnegate!

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45 Ibid., 232.

46 The quotation is from Emerson's famous essay "The American Scholar."

Submit!" The spirit of Anarchism has lifted man from his prostrate position. He now stands erect, with his face toward the light. He has learned to see the insatiable, devouring, devastating nature of property, and he is preparing to strike the monster dead.<sup>47</sup>

This quote provides a succinct illustration of Goldman's communism, which she understood above all as opposition to private property, and while previous American anti-authoritarians had consistently criticized capitalism from a variety of angles, Goldman, absorbing the critique of property in Marx, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin, rejected it entirely. This was the primary locus of debate between "communist" and "individualist" anarchists as it existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, Goldman's anarchism—and that of Berkman, her partner in agitation and, at times, in love—was conceived as a synoptic program of human freedom in every dimension: political, economic, religious, sexual, and artistic. She took up the banner of radical feminism—which, as we have seen, had already been connected to American anti-authoritarianism throughout the nineteenth century—and was among the first Americans to publicly support the rights of homosexuals. One of Goldman's original contributions was to connect American anarchism with the literary and artistic avant-garde that had begun to emerge in New York while she was living in Greenwich village in the early twentieth century. Indeed, many important American artists of that era were highly influenced by her liberatory vision, including Robert Henri, Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, Georgia O'Keeffe, and various other luminaries.<sup>48</sup>

### Nineteenth-Century American Anarchists: Biographical Sketches

*Stephen Pearl Andrews* (1821–1886): Andrews moved to Louisiana as a young man and practiced law in Texas, where he became an abolitionist. His book *The Science of Society* (1851) is explicitly presented as a discussion of Warren's ideas. He formed a number of scandalous semi-secret organizations, including the League of the Men of Progress and the Grand Order of Recreation, which was broken up on morals charges for its sexual and substance abuse practices.

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47 Emma Goldman, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For," in *Anarchism and Other Essays* [1910] (New York: Dover, 1969), 58–59.

48 See Allan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

He later produced the first American translation of *The Communist Manifesto* for *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*.

*Alexander Berkman* (1870–1936): Berkman was a close associate of Emma Goldman's and the author of the anarchist classics *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* and *Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism*. He emigrated from Russia to New York in 1888. In a plot hatched with Goldman in 1892, Berkman shot and stabbed the industrialist Henry Clay Frick, who survived the attack. (Frick had recently broken a strike at the Homestead steel works in Pennsylvania, an action in which nine workers were killed.). He served fourteen years in prison. Exiled in 1920 with Goldman and many other European radicals under the Espionage Act for opposing conscription during the First World War, he subsequently became an outspoken critic of the newly-created Soviet Union.

*Voltaireine de Cleyre* (1866–1912): Although De Cleyre was named for the French freethinker Voltaire, her impoverished parents placed her in a convent in her native Michigan when she was a teenager. Emerging as an atheist and radical, she began lecturing as a religious skeptic in the 1880s and contributing to various individualist periodicals. De Cleyre became an anarchist after Haymarket, and possibly assisted her lover Dyer Lum in smuggling the blasting cap by which Louis Lingg committed suicide in prison. While living in Philadelphia, where she scratched out a living teaching English to immigrants, she was shot by an obsessed student in 1902, refusing to participate in his prosecution and appealing for support for his defense in anarchist periodicals. Although de Cleyre gradually came to identify with the Goldman/Berkman brand of communist anarchism, she insisted on describing herself as “an anarchist without adjectives.” She was plagued by depression and illness throughout her life, having attempted suicide at least once, and died young. Berkman edited her *Selected Writings* after her death.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1803–1882): Perhaps the most famous American literary figure and thinker of the nineteenth century, Emerson articulated a basic account of American character and aspirations in classic essays such as “Self-Reliance” and “The American Scholar.” Associated with American radical reform movements such as abolitionism and pacifism—albeit at a distance—Emerson expressed anti-statist sentiments many times, though not always with complete consistency. He was a mentor to and friend of Thoreau.

*William Lloyd Garrison* (1805–1879): Garrison was the leader of the radical wing of American abolitionism, arguing from a radical anti-Calvinist Protestant Christianity for the immediate abolition of slavery and the secession of the non-slave states from the slave states. He was also a remarkably principled and consistent advocate of feminism, anti-racism, and non-resistance (pacifism),

the latter on Biblical grounds. On the basis of his radical pacifism, Garrison concluded that human governments, all of which rest on force, are entirely illegitimate. Publisher of *The Liberator*, Garrison was the living conscience of American abolitionism and pacifism.

*William Batchelder Greene* (1819–1878): Like Emerson, Greene was originally a Unitarian minister. Briefly a resident of the transcendentalist community of Brook Farm, Massachusetts, where Nathaniel Hawthorne also lived for a time, he helped introduce Proudhon's ideas to American audiences and developed a system of mutual banking. He was also influenced directly by Josiah Warren on such economic and political issues. Later in his life he wrote about such diverse topics as the history of American transcendentalism, the interpretation of the Kabbala, and calculus.

*Sarah Grimké* (1792–1873) and *Angelina Grimké* (1805–1879): The Grimké Sisters were raised in South Carolina in a slaveholding family (their father was the Chief Justice of the state), but Sarah quickly became disgusted by slavery. Having converted to Quakerism on a trip to Philadelphia in 1819 (thanks in large part to John Woolman's writings), the sisters' abolitionist lectures of the late 1820s were among the very first acts of public advocacy by American women. Sarah's *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes* (1837) is one of the earliest American feminist texts, approaching the matter from a deeply religious form of individualism. Angelina married Theodore Dwight Weld in an egalitarian ceremony in 1838.

*Emma Goldman* (1869–1940): A writer, editor, public speaker, and agitator, Goldman was famous for her fiery public oratory and her unflinching public advocacy of many radical ideas including anarchism and feminism. Goldman emigrated to the United States from Russia in 1885 and worked in a sewing factory in Rochester where she entered into an unhappy marriage. She became a radical after moving to New York in 1889. Called "the most dangerous woman in America," she created a sensation as a speaker and was significantly responsible for popularizing anarchism in the United States. Goldman was accused of a conspiracy to assassinate President William McKinley, though no evidence was ever produced. She founded and edited *Mother Earth*, one of the most important radical periodicals of the early twentieth century, and was arrested and imprisoned many times for her political activities. Following her deportation to Russia in 1920, Goldman confronted Lenin in his office and accused him of authoritarianism, particularly in regard to the Kronstadt Rebellion.

*Moses Harman* (1830–1910): Harman was an individualist anarchist and advocate of free love who published the incomparably radical feminist and free love periodical *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*, first in Kansas and later in Chicago

and Los Angeles. Prosecuted under the Comstock Laws and sentenced to hard labor in the 1890s, he became a *cause célèbre* for Voltairine de Cleyre and many other American radicals.

*Angela Tilton Heywood* (1840–1935) and *Ezra Heywood* (1829–1893): After studying for the ministry, Ezra Heywood signed up with Garrison as an abolitionist preacher in the late 1850s. Following the Civil War, he plunged into labor organizing in Boston, where he made the acquaintance of Warren and was converted to the latter's ideas. He wrote a number of pamphlets and essays regarding issues of political economy from Warren's perspective. For decades he published the radical periodical *The Word*, and was associated with such figures as Victoria Woodhull. Ezra's feminism and advocacy of free love was no doubt influenced by his wife Angela, a radical feminist and a remarkable writer. Together they published birth control pamphlets and other sexual information. As a result, Ezra Heywood ran afoul of Anthony Comstock and was arrested and imprisoned a number of times by the 1880s.

*Johann Most* (1846–1906): Most was a newspaper editor and a fiery advocate for anarchist communism. Born in Germany, Most emigrated to the United States in 1882, where he introduced Emma Goldman to the speaking platform and helped popularize the concept of "propaganda by the deed," which helped motivate the wave of assassinations by anarchists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Goldman publicly lashed Most with a horsewhip after he criticized Alexander Berkman's assassination attempt on the industrialist Henry Clay Frick. He was the author of *The Science of Revolutionary Warfare* and other works.

*Lucretia Coffin Mott* (1793–1880): Mott was a Quaker minister and a pioneering abolitionist and feminist who advocated a host of radical positions including total non-resistance and anti-statism. From the pulpit and in early public speeches, she was devout, direct, and uncompromisingly radical. Influenced by the individualism of Emerson and Thoreau—and an influence on them in turn—she was one of the organizers of the Seneca Falls women's rights convention in 1848, where she also helped draft the famous "Declaration of Sentiments." Mott played a role in the founding of Swarthmore College in 1864 and the Free Religious Association in Boston in 1867.

*Nathaniel Peabody Rogers* (1794–1846): Rogers was a radical abolitionist and anti-statist who published the New Hampshire abolitionist paper *The Herald of Freedom* was the subject of essays by Thoreau and Whittier. He began as a Christian pacifist (and an anarchist on those grounds), but expressed more and more religious skepticism as his life went on. The following is representative of his thought and sensibilities: "Men better be without tongues and



organs and powers, than not use them sovereignly. If it be not safe to entrust self-government of speech to mankind, there had better not be any mankind. Slavery is worse than non-existence. A society involving it is worse than none. The earth had better go unpeopled than inhabited by vassals.”

*Lysander Spooner* (1808–1887): Spooner was a deist, an abolitionist, and an individualist anarchist. His work *The Unconstitutionality of Slavery* (1846) was an amazingly accomplished exercise in legal interpretation that defended a position rejected by the Garrisonians—namely, that the Constitution and, by extension, the U.S. Government itself are wholly legitimate precisely because they condone slavery. (Spooner agreed with the latter on independent grounds.) Spooner established a privately-run alternative to the U.S. Post Office, and tried to organize an incursion to free John Brown after the Harper’s Ferry raid. His many works—including *No Treason* (1867–70) and *Vices Are Not Crimes* (1875)—are classics of libertarian thought. Unlike Warren, Garrison, or the transcendentalists, Spooner’s radical politics was based fundamentally on the concept of natural rights.

*Henry David Thoreau* (1817–1862): Thoreau is, of course, among the best American prose stylists, and his work is political from the outset; the religious skepticism and anarchism expressed in his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack River* (1849), would have been controversial had it been read. His essay “Civil Disobedience”—written after Thoreau spent a night in jail for refusing to pay taxes in support of the Mexican-American War, which he regarded as an attempt to expand slavery—is a classic of individualist, abolitionist, and anti-statist thought.

*Benjamin Tucker* (1854–1939): Tucker was an individualist anarchist and the publisher of the newspaper *Liberty* (1881 to 1908), which featured the work of many important anarchists of the era including Voltairine de Cleyre. He was personally acquainted with Warren, Heywood, and Spooner and originally regarded himself as a follower of Warren and Spooner in particular. Tucker translated works by Proudhon, Stirner, and Bakunin and was significantly responsible for introducing European anarchism to American audiences. Although he began as a severe critic of capitalism, he was associated with Stirner’s egoism later in his life and was posthumously annexed to pro-capitalist libertarianism.

*Josiah Warren* (1798–1874): Warren is often regarded as a founder of individualist anarchism, though he was also an anti-capitalist. Warren joined Robert Owen’s New Harmony Community (probably the first secular American ideal community) in the 1820s, rejected what he called its “communism,” and spent the rest of his career planning and founding communities based on a radically individualistic metaphysics that was in some ways similar to Thoreau’s

and Emerson's transcendentalism. Although he rejected the profit motive, he nonetheless insisted on the sanctity of property and conscience. He published the first anarchist periodical—*The Peaceful Revolutionist*—in 1833 and directed a number of radical projects including the Cincinatti Time Store and the utopian communities of Utopia, Ohio and Modern Times, New York (the latter being perhaps the wildest Temporary Autonomous Zone in American history). Associated later with Stephen Pearl Andrews, Ezra Heywood, and Benjamin Tucker, he was active in the radical labor movement at the end of his life.

*Henry Clarke Wright* (1797–1870): Wright was an associate of Garrison's for much of his career and among the most unequivocal anarchists of the period. Co-founder of the New England Non-Resistance Society, he began as a Christian pacifist and wrote such tracts as *Ballot Box and Battle Field*, which condemned all human government as violence and claimed that voting itself was a violent act carried out in complicity with, and support for, the state. In later life he (at least) qualified his Christianity, explored spiritualism, and advocated a host of radical reforms.

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## Anarchism and Phenomenology

*Joeri Schrijvers*

### Introduction

In many ways, phenomenology may be considered a liberation of philosophy. Instead of abstraction, phenomenology offers a description of concrete lived experiences; instead of speculations about the highest being called God, phenomenology brackets all transcendent concepts and returns the practice of philosophy to the plane of immanence and finitude; instead of constructing hierarchies in and of being, phenomenology brings philosophy back to our encounters with, and experiences of, the most ordinary and inconsequential forms of being. In short, phenomenology “turn[s] life itself into philosophy,” as Jean-Paul Sartre is said to have remarked in reference to the thought of Martin Heidegger.

Although there does not appear to be a political phenomenology as such, there are some phenomenologically inspired investigations of political concepts including sovereignty in Derrida and democracy in Nancy—two thinkers who, we must admit, are often considered “heretics” within the classic phenomenological tradition. If there is authority in phenomenology, it is the authority of the phenomenon itself: the phenomenologist’s role is simply to describe how the phenomenon appears to consciousness. This phenomenological practice (technically, the practice of the reduction) seeks to do nothing else but describe how a phenomenon appears to human beings or how an experience is lived (it is no coincidence, accordingly, that phenomenology quickly gave way to existentialism). The “how” of the phenomenon’s appearing is no longer measured against a standard of how it *ought* to appear. Its “essence” is nowhere other than its sheer showing up in consciousness: there is no gap between “seeming,” “semblance,” and “being.” The “how” of experience is such that each and every experience is capable of being phenomenologically investigated. One can imagine the excitement this new philosophy generated within the philosophical scene; all of a sudden philosophers began to speak and write about such ordinary things as tables (Husserl), the experience of anxiety and boredom (Heidegger), and waiters and smoking cigarettes (Sartre).

In this chapter, I will present a brief historical overview of the phenomenological tradition in order to demonstrate its relationship with anarchism. As

I have suggested, this relationship is primarily played out on an ontological rather than a political level insofar as the liberation of the phenomenon (or of experience) increasingly gives way to an anarchism of being and of world. It is precisely this *event of world* that is properly (and, perhaps, principally) anarchic, as it is the world itself that happens without a “why,” without an origin or a goal. From the meticulous (and somewhat neurotic) phenomenological descriptions of Husserl to newer phenomenological analyses by the likes of Jean-Luc Marion and Claude Romano, phenomenology has come a long way in its ability to describe such an event of world.

### Husserl’s Transcendental Phenomenology and Derrida’s “Anarchy of the Noema”

Notwithstanding the excitement phenomenology aroused within philosophical circles at the beginning of the twentieth century, it took the discipline a long time to extricate itself from the transcendental and idealist traditions of Kant and Hegel, respectively. Husserl offered a sort of dynamic Kantianism according to which transcendental categories of the understanding such as space and time remain *conditions of possibility* for a phenomenon to appear or for an experience to be lived, but such conditions are situated within an experience of embodiment and “kinesthetic” bodily movements. An example might help to make this clear: although the perception of a table always takes place within space and time, my experience of a particular table requires both time and space for me to walk around the table and see it from all sides. Although I could just as well imagine a table or recall one that I saw earlier, the transcendental structure of consciousness is such that it cannot *not* relate to the appearance of phenomena (a bit like someone telling you to “try not to think of a table” and you immediately see a table appear).

Husserl attempts to describe the mode of being of consciousness that is always related to this or that particular phenomenon. Even when I remember or imagine a table, my consciousness is nonetheless related to the phenomenon of a table. This, however, already illustrates one of the peculiarities of phenomenology: whence do I acquire the ability to produce the concept of the table in the absence of any real table? In what sense is an imagined table the same as the real one here before me—the one upon which I’m typing this text—and in what sense is it different? Husserl’s answer is that even when I imagine or remember the phenomenon, I (noetically) relate to the “noema” of just such a phenomenon. I remember the table *as* a table because even in my memory this table will show up as a plane with four legs.

There is a real difference, then, between the intuition (or experience) of a table and the recognition of a table as a table. It is not primarily on the basis of experience that the latter is possible—an extraterrestrial, for instance, would most likely not recognize the object before it as a table. For Husserl, the ability of human beings to recognize a table as a table—i.e., to think the “noema” of a “table in general”—is founded on our intentional noetic relations to a multiplicity of tables. A general problem with Husserl’s phenomenology is that it is not clear whether the existence of a table precedes its essence or, conversely, whether my preexistent knowledge of the essence of tables allows me to empirically recognize particular tables in the world. Husserl’s entire trajectory, one might say, wavers between realism (the first option) and transcendental idealism (the second option). Throughout his philosophy, however, Husserl insists on a real difference between intuition and intention: I can sit at the table but I cannot sit at the essence of the table.<sup>1</sup>

As we will see, it is Derrida who capitalizes on Husserl’s indecision here. For now, it is important to recognize that newer phenomenologies of the event are mostly critical of this idealistic element in Husserl’s philosophy. Although they do not abandon transcendental thought altogether (in one way or another, they still adhere to conditions of possibility for phenomena), they nonetheless criticize the idealistic stance of transcendental phenomenology and its emphasis on an autonomous subjectivity capable of “constituting” and “creating” the conditions of possibility for phenomena and experience.

Jean-Luc Marion is particularly representative of this critique. According to Marion, Husserl’s account of intentionality is restricted to very simple objects (such as tables) over which the human mind and its capacity for phenomenological “constitution”—when an “essence” or “idea” of a thing takes precedence over the thing itself—can exercise control and domination. Such domination, however, has little or no traction in what is actually given to human beings in the world. For Marion, the phenomenon in this case still suffers “alienation”: it must relinquish its true self, as it were, in order to submit to the conditions that consciousness lays out for it. These conditions limit the freedom of the phenomenon to appear in at least three ways: the

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1 The *locus classicus* for the basics of phenomenology is Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to A Pure Phenomenology I*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), §87–96, 211–233, esp. 16: “The *tree simpliciter*, the physical thing belonging to Nature, is nothing less than this *perceived tree as perceived*, which, as perceptual sense, inseparably belongs to the perception. The *tree simpliciter* can burn up, be resolved into its chemical elements, etc. But the sense—the sense of *this* perception, something belonging necessarily to its essence—cannot burn up. It has no chemical elements, no forces, no real properties.”

phenomenon must first submit to what one might call “the principle of sufficient intuition,” then to a “horizon” from which to judge its appearance, and finally to a subject for whom this phenomenon is detectable. In the case of the phenomenon of the table, this means, first, that there must be at least a hint of something like a table in order for me to intuit the phenomenon; second, that the table before me cannot differ too much from what I typically understand as a table (which in turn functions as the horizon from which I am able to recognize tables at all); and lastly, that the phenomenon of the table must appear to me as one who actively constitutes and reduces the empirical table to its essence of a plane with four legs.<sup>2</sup>

To this Marion opposes a total liberation of phenomenality according to which the “saturated phenomenon” is a phenomenon that gives itself from itself, of itself, and as itself and, in this way, is freed from the clutches of the idealist subject that creates conditions of possibility for all phenomena. Marion’s saturated phenomena reverse the roles: rather than the subject quietly contemplating and thus constituting phenomena, the phenomenon now takes over by showing up unexpectedly and as a surprise: it is without horizon and without causal explanation, without a determinate intuition—it is not clear whether what I see is a “thing,” or even whether I am seeing anything in particular at all. Finally, rather than being constituted by subjectivity, the saturated phenomenon is what constitutes *me*, giving me to myself by giving phenomena (as their very selves) to me. For Marion, it is precisely such an event that constitutes the reality of givenness.

For all its talk about excess and bedazzlement, Marion’s phenomenology tries to return phenomenology to its very foundations, to our “banal” encounters with things.<sup>3</sup> It is this banality, however, that is saturating and giving: no matter how much I want the table in front of me to submit to the intention and the essence I conceived in advance of its appearing, it always remains the case that there is an excess of the thing over and against my conception of the thing. Even this table here and my recognition of its appearance bring about intuitions of other tables I’ve seen, of the horizons needed to recognize this table here, of the multiplicity and perhaps eternity of selves necessary to describe the phenomenon of the table exhaustively.

Marion’s phenomenological analysis of the event serves as one of the foundations of (new) phenomenology. It is perhaps regrettable that the saturated

2 See Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given. Toward A Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. J. Kosky (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 184–189.

3 See Jean-Luc Marion, “The Banality of Saturation,” in *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. C. Geschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 119–144.



phenomenon has always been interpreted as a sort of maximum-case of phenomenality, or at least as the *nec plus ultra* for the phenomenon, and it must be admitted that Marion's own metaphors—especially in *Being Given*—have contributed in large part to this reading. It must be also be admitted from the outset that there is no anarchy of the event in Marion, unlike in the work of other contemporary phenomenologists such as Jean-Yves Lacoste and Claude Romano. For all his efforts, Marion is first and foremost a theologian and there is in his phenomenology only a single name for the one in control of phenomenality: God.<sup>4</sup>

A similar if more down-to-earth critique of Husserl may be found in the (early) work of Jacques Derrida, whose philosophy developed out of commentaries on Husserl's phenomenology. In general, Derrida criticizes Husserl's somewhat utopian belief that one can lay hold of the phenomenon as such. For Derrida neither a pure intuition nor a pure intentionality are possible; there is no such thing as the thing as such. Even in those cases where a pure (i.e., immediate) intuition seems at issue—for example, when I touch my hand—it is not myself “as such” that I am touching for Derrida. There is already an impure trace of something else that is no longer me. (Think of sweat or skin flakes here, for example.) Yet the pure “concept” of a thing is also impossible; for me to see the table *as* a table, to entertain a number *as* a number, or, in Derrida's case, to recognize the laws of geometry *as* “infinite” and “abstract” laws, it is necessary at one point or other to have recourse to this very empirical and very finite figure at the “origin” of geometry without which we would not be able to know these laws in the first place (just as the presence and interpretation of the phenomenologist is always already at play in the appearance of a phenomenon.)<sup>5</sup>

Derrida's basic point is that, there is always a brute (and banal) encounter with reality underlying our will to pure concepts and pure intuitions that refuses to hand over its secrets because no such secrets exist. There is, accordingly, something of an *aporia* in the early Derrida: just as I cannot have immediate access to the singular (I cannot intuit this one table here without invoking some general idea of what a table is), so I cannot generalize at will (I cannot speak of tables “in general” without at least taking one table into account). This muteness of matter, this virtual “thing” that does not allow any pure signifiers

4 This is made especially clear in *In the Self's Place. The Approach of Saint Augustine*, trans. J. Kosky (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2012).

5 Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. J.P. Leavey (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

or signifieds, is what Derrida calls *différance*. If we could get hold of it, this *différance* would be anarchic: insofar as it resists all unity and unification, always already eluding the desire of intuition and intention to grasp the thing “as such.” We cannot get a hold of *difference*, however, because it is not a thing but an event that *happens*.<sup>6</sup>

For Derrida, therefore, *différance* has something of a ghostly (or, in the terms of his early work, plainly anarchic) character. As he writes in his commentary on Husserl:

Noema, which is the objectivity of the object, the meaning and the “as such” of the thing for consciousness, is neither the determined thing itself in its untamed existence [...] nor is it a properly subjective moment [...] it is neither of the world nor of consciousness, but it is the world or something of the world *for* consciousness. [This] real nonappurtenance to any region at all, this *anarchy* of the noema is the root [of] meaning.<sup>7</sup>

We have no idea whence comes the “noema” and the essence of a thing which gives meaning to our experiences; we cannot decide whether it “arises” from reality or whether it is solely a “creation” of the mind. Here Derrida is aiming at what he elsewhere refers to (quite paradoxically) as a “transcendental historicity,” thus anticipating what I will call “the anarchistic event of world” later in this chapter.<sup>8</sup> By combining these two mutually exclusive terms, Derrida is overthrowing Kant’s strict distinction between the transcendental and the historical. Whereas for Kant the transcendental categories of space and time are the conditions of possibility for history and historicity even though they themselves, qua transcendental, are not subject to history, time, or change, there is for Derrida something transcendental in historicity and something historical in the transcendental, as though the one thing that does not change is change itself.

6 This happens all the time and everywhere. For the (later) Derrida, *différance* is the very movement of life; it is that which happens “when you’re busy making other plans.” For an interesting analysis of Derrida’s realism, see Michael Marder, *The Event of the Thing: Derrida’s Postdeconstructive Realism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

7 Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 163. For a commentary on this passage in reference to Deleuze, see Nicolas de Warren, “The Anarchy of Sense: Husserl in Deleuze, Deleuze in Husserl,” in *Paradigm 2* (2014): 49–69.

8 See Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry*, 42, 107.

### Heidegger's Phenomenological Ontology and Schürmann's "Principle of Anarchy"

In the early days of phenomenology it was not at all unusual to speak of abstract concepts such as "reality" and "world." It was Heidegger who shifted the focus of phenomenology to existence and its being-in-the-world by providing detailed phenomenological descriptions of ordinary experiences such as boredom and anxiety. This involved a clear break from Husserl's rather technical phenomenology and its description of what can be called "minor" phenomena. Although Husserl and Heidegger would both agree that the "bracketing" of transcendence leads to a persistent emphasis on the finitude of all beings, the latter moves away from the former in situating consciousness firmly in the world. In a sense, Heidegger's phenomenology is nothing more than an attempt to describe the human condition of being restricted to this very world. Phenomenology has better things to do, accordingly, than narcissistically mulling over the "awareness of the 'I' of actions."<sup>9</sup> Heidegger entirely does away with the "philosophical" problem of the existence of a world outside of consciousness which, as we have seen, continued to plague Husserl. For Heidegger, the human being exists in the world—a world in which various kinds of phenomena ("... that which shows itself in itself"<sup>10</sup>) appear.

At the same time, Heidegger seems to have believed that what is most important in human life does not ordinarily show itself. It is the work of the phenomenologist to disclose or bring to light that which remains hidden—a bit like a magician. For Heidegger, human beings are usually not themselves insofar as they tend to lose themselves in the various roles they occupy. Such alienation, in turn, implies that a person "stands in *subjection* to Others."<sup>11</sup> The whole point of Heidegger's phenomenological ontology and existential analytic is to eradicate this subjection and to discover a firm footing for the individual self. This return to the self, which is a kind of liberation, occurs when one faces the possibility of one's own death or when one is experiencing angst in a way that makes the social world cease to be important. It is in such moments that one becomes aware that "there is no authority but oneself."

As tempting as it may be to interpret this line of thinking in anarchistic terms, Heidegger's thinking and style were actually quite authoritarian. For a long while he flirted with fascism and regarded the German *Volk* as the one

9 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1967).

10 Ibid., 51.

11 Ibid., 164.

people who would undergo spiritual renewal amidst the turmoil of our technological era. (Conveniently, he remained silent about the war and his own involvement with the Nazi party.) Reiner Schürmann drew conclusions from Heidegger's thought that are far more radical than Heidegger himself would have countenanced.<sup>12</sup> Schürmann focuses not so much on Heidegger's existential analytic but rather on the thinking of being that Heidegger began to develop in the 1930s. In this thinking of being, Heidegger demonstrates that "being" had been forgotten, that it had somehow been hidden or covered over by being reduced to something else. Such an ontic reduction (or, in Heidegger's parlance, "ontotheology") proceeds from the assumption that the whole of reality can be ascertained from one "being" or "principle." Neoplatonism, for example, proceeds from the principle that "all is One"; Christianity from the principle that "all is good," and modern philosophy from the principle that "all appears to the subject." For Heidegger, ontotheology and the end of its metaphysics implies that "being" has been decoupled from all such principles. What remains in the absence of this kind of metaphysics is the history of Being itself.

For Heidegger and Schürmann, Being (or "world" for those of us who dislike metaphysical terminology), happens from "epoch to epoch" with little or no communication between. Attempts to "frame" being within one principle may succeed for awhile, but they are destined to fail and fade away, leaving us in a world "without why," a world that is nothing more than a "coming to pass".<sup>13</sup> One might argue that Schürmann extends the fate of individual Dasein from the darkness of its own "from whence" or "whither" to the entire history of being itself. It is the world or being itself that happens without origin or goal.<sup>14</sup>

For a long time, Schürmann remained convinced that there were political and practical conclusions to be drawn from this ontological anarchism—an anarchism pertaining to the event of world and being. Unfortunately his premature death (Schürmann died of AIDS in 1993 at the age of 52) prevented him from develop these conclusions in full.<sup>15</sup> A few indications can be gathered from his major published works. In *Le Principe d'anarchie*, oddly translated as *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, Schürmann develops what he calls the "practical

12 Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principle to Anarchy*, trans. C.-M. Gros (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 38.

13 Ibid., 57.

14 Cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 173: "The pure 'that it is' [of Dasein] shows itself, but the 'whence' and the 'whither' remains in darkness."

15 For Schürmann's politics, one might consult: R. Schürmann, *The Public Realm. Essays on Discursive Types in Political Philosophy* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989).

a priori" of a "life without why." Such a life would entail a level of sincerity and authenticity that is unfortunately all too rare in contemporary philosophy as well as in life itself: "To understand [Heidegger's] authentic temporality, it is necessary to 'exist authentically'; to think being as letting phenomena be, one must oneself 'let all things be'; to follow the play without why of [the] presencing [of being], it is necessary to 'live without why.'"<sup>16</sup> The practical a priori can be summed up thusly: "a mode of thinking is made dependent on a mode of living."<sup>17</sup>

Whereas in earlier metaphysical reasoning acting follows being (Thomas Aquinas) and willing follows thinking (Descartes), Schürmann reverses this completely: what one thinks and is able to think follows from what one does and how one is able to live. One way to understand this practical (and perhaps political) injunction is to think of Derrida's discussion of the idea of sovereignty and its theological heritage: the sovereign is one who can make an exception of himself, as when a ruler dictates that his people should be vegetarians while the ruler himself remains a meat-eater. The "theological" heritage of this idea of sovereignty lies precisely in the fact that the sovereign *can* make an exception of himself, just as the Uncaused Cause of medieval metaphysics is not caused itself and Aristotle's Unmoved Mover moves everything while remaining unmoved. It is therefore tempting to see in Schürmann's praxis an appeal to "live up to" one's own standards over and against the hypocritical attitude of the one whose "yes" is not a "yes" and whose "no" is not a "no." One is reminded here of one of Emmanuel Levinas' sayings: "All that one demands of oneself is demanded of a saint, but what one may demand of the Other is always less".<sup>18</sup>

In the strict sense, Schürmann was not politically supportive of the anarchist tradition. In *Le principe d'anarchie*, for instance, he quite explicitly distances himself from it, stating that: "[In this book,] it will not be a question of anarchy in the sense of Proudhon, Bakunin and their disciples. What these masters sought was to *displace* the origin, to substitute the 'rational' power, *princípio*, for the power of authority, *princeps*—as metaphysical an operation as has ever been."<sup>19</sup> For Schürmann anarchism has not abandoned authority but

16 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 287.

17 Ibid., p. 237.

18 Cf. J. Goud, "What one Asks of Oneself, One Asks of a Saint": A Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas, 1980–1981," in *Levinas Studies* 3 (2008): 23. For more on Schürmann, see my "Anarchistic Tendencies in Continental Philosophy" in *Research in Phenomenology* 37 (2007): 417–439.

19 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 6. See also S. Newman, *The Politics of Postanarchism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 52ff.

replaced and overturned it with yet another authority in such a way that the “authoritative place has been preserved.” One may, of course, take issue with Schürmann’s interpretation of this tradition; but at the very least Schürmann’s ontological anarchism explains both why one must rid oneself of all authority (for the event of world does not agree with any stable authority) as well why there is nothing more difficult than abandoning authority altogether.<sup>20</sup> In response to the latter concern, Schürmann develops the concept of the “natural metaphysician” in all of us, a sort of ontological and transcendental tendency to privilege authority, permanence, and principles.

The concept of “the natural metaphysician,” which is brought to the fore in Schürmann’s posthumously published *Broken Hegemonies*,<sup>21</sup> concerns our inability to do anything other than bring the “originary wildness” of being, world, and finitude “to order.”<sup>22</sup> Yet the anarchic event of being and world remains untamed and, even if one or another system makes the whole of reality intelligible for awhile, it, too, will eventually be reduced to its finite origins because the “pull toward mortality” affects every entity as such: no order, system, or entity is exempt from fading away.<sup>23</sup> It comes as no surprise, accordingly, that it is in this voluminous and notoriously difficult tome that Schürmann provides the fullest account of his understanding of ontological anarchism, explaining how the various epochs of being and their corresponding highest beings come to temporarily dominate what can appear, as well as how all epochs—whether Greek, Roman, or modern—contain elements that will disrupt their own order and cause them to wither away.

Beyond these epochs of being, there is only the an-archic event of being itself. “[I]f there is anarchy, this word would indicate the impossibility of an ultimate, simply normative referent.”<sup>24</sup>: there is not one name that will exhaustively and definitely circumscribe being and world. Schürmann therefore points to a “wildness” and originary “conflictuality” between the various

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20 For confirmation of Schürmann’s position, see P. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible. A History of Anarchism* (Oakland, Calif.: PM Press, 2010), 249–250: “While each person has a right to private judgment, there is only one inherent good: Justice. Proudhon devotes long, rapturous passages to this capitalized principle; indeed having boldly overthrown, the Christian God, he reintroduces him in the different guise of Justice: ‘Justice is the supreme God’, we are told, ‘it is the living God.’” Marshall is referring to Proudhon’s *Justice in the Revolution and the Church* [1858].

21 Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. R. Lily (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003), e.g., 94, 156, 211.

22 *Ibid.*, 504.

23 *Ibid.*, e.g., 624.

24 *Ibid.*, 289.

“referents” conjured up in the philosophies of the natural metaphysician.<sup>25</sup> There remains something of an ultimate hiddenness in Schürmann’s thought, for the anarchic event of being is repeatedly covered over by the irreconcilably conflicting and mutually exclusive phantasms of natural metaphysics.

### Levinas: A Non-Phenomenology of the Other

in anticipation of the tragedies that are inevitably engendered by totalitarian systems, Levinas follows Schürmann in developing an anarchic account of being (or, in own his terminology, of what is beyond or otherwise than being) that focuses on the one thing that cannot be reduced to a mere phenomenon, a mere part of a totalitarian system. This one thing, this enigma that excludes all showing up in phenomenality, is “the face.” For Levinas, the human being is not just a being; it is, rather, the one being that may not be reduced to its own beingness or phenomenality—i.e., the particular way it shows up in being and world. A waiter is not just a waiter, a salesman is not just a salesman, a Jew is not just a Jew, and so forth.

To Levinas’ mind the human being is always other than what can be perceived or experienced phenomenologically. This is why the human being is “outside of” or “otherwise than” being. It is the principle that sets everything else in motion. For Levinas, it is not ontology that allows us to speak; rather, it is because we speak, because we disclose ourselves to one another as speaking beings, that ontology (and, for that matter, phenomenology) is possible in the first place. The human being is therefore “outside the system”; it is what can always protest and revolt against totalitarian attempts to grasp being as a whole or to re-organize society on a single, uniform model. In this sense, it is the humanity of the human, the “humanism of the Other,” that orients and directs all attempts to make sense of being and world. It is such a not-being-part-of, such an outside, that Levinas calls it “otherwise than being.”

For Levinas, the human face is both with and without principle. He is well aware that, more often than not, we regard the waiter as just a waiter, the salesman as just a salesman. But Levinas is writing in the wake of the Second World War and his entire philosophy can be understood as a response to totalitarianism and fascism. This is why Levinas’ account of the face has such strong ethical implications; one *must not* lose sight of the fact that human beings are always more and other than the roles they play within one or another system. Levinas’ later writings try to make sense of this ambiguous tendency to reduce the other to the same while simultaneously recognizing our obligation

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25 Ibid., 585.

to honor the other's otherness. For Levinas, the human being is both an "enigma" (unlike all other beings) as well as a "phenomenon" (just like all other phenomena).<sup>26</sup>

Levinas has often been accused of presenting the anarchy of the face itself as a universal and "principled" signifier in a way that makes the Other the ultimate ruler and sovereign. It does not help that many of Levinas' writings are not only ethical but also religious and theological in nature. The suspicion, accordingly, is that the "authority" of the Other can only be sustained if there is an even greater Other—namely, God—always at work. Even in his later philosophical writings Levinas describes the anarchy of the Other, and its movement "beyond" the system as an event of "infinite." <sup>27</sup> In Levinas' defense, however, it must be noted that he took great pains to maintain this ambiguity to the very end. It is the very condition of possibility for our being attuned to the Other rather than to our empirical dealings and encounters with others that he is seeking to describe. It is for this reason—the "ontological" fact that we are committed to others and "have to be" our being-with others—that the possibility of something like the divine should perhaps be included, unless one turns to the dogmatic certainty of atheism.<sup>28</sup>

One can already sense in Levinas phenomenology's the attraction to an event that escapes all attempts to master or dominate its "eventiveness." It is such doubling that fascinates recent phenomenologies—not the fact that there is this or that empirical event, or this or that concrete encounter with others, but the very fact of the presence (*presencing*, Heidegger would say) of such events and encounters. For example, I can determine whether or not I will meet you tomorrow at 2 p.m, but the very fact of my existing, and thus my ability to meet you tomorrow, is not of my making.

### *Derrida and Nancy*

It is to Derrida that we owe a more down-to-earth phenomenological take on what is other to us. Early in his career, Derrida already noted that Husserl's account of the other, though severely criticized by Levinas, was as respectful of

26 The reference is to Levinas' "Enigma and Phenomenon," in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. A. Peperzak, S. Critchley, and R. Bernasconi (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996), 65–78.

27 Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. A. Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 2002), 93.

28 Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, trans. B. Bergo (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 93: "This glory is without principle: there is in infinity an anarchical element."



the otherness of the other as Levinas desired.<sup>29</sup> Husserl's account of the *alter ego* is not just a "reduction of the other to the same," as Levinas argues; even if I reduce the waiter to just a waiter, there remains, both for the waiter and for me, something of an otherness that does not give way to such a reduction. Husserl terms this the "apperception" in every perception. No matter how close we are, no matter how I see or hear or touch you and thus how I determine that you are indeed *like* me, an "other ego," I cannot see what you think nor predict what you will say.

It is such an "originary appresentation," or nonpresence at the heart of all presence, that Derrida will later extend to the event of world by showing that everything we encounter is an enigma as much as it is a phenomenon. Today it is difficult to fathom why it took philosophy so long to think about (being-in-the-) world; indeed, the attempts of modern philosophers such as Descartes to prove the existence of the world seem like foolishness. For Derrida, the originary nonpresence at the heart of all presence, the very fact of its presencing prior to all reductions, is no longer concerned solely with the intersubjective encounter but with the very presence and facticity of the world. The world "worlds" beyond me—it exists beyond the reach of my consciousness, with and finally "without" me, persisting even after my being has come to an end. The implications of such an extension are numerous. From a Heideggerian perspective, Derrida's view is far more attentive to ecological questions—for example, questions concerning animals, such as "how is the animal an Other?" and "does one *encounter* animals and vice versa?")—than Levinas and the entirety of the metaphysical tradition.

For all this, one cannot really speak of an ontological (or political) anarchy in Derrida. For his part, Derrida, remained "all for the tradition" insofar as these traditions, systems, and authorities are recognized both in their "pervertibility" as well as their "perfectibility."<sup>30</sup> For Derrida, the best and the worst are possibly yet to come; as with all phenomena, it can go either way, perhaps at the same time. At the same time, he insists that there can be no institution, no

29 Especially in his "Violence and Metaphysics" (1967), which is included in *Writing and Difference*, 79–153.

30 For Derrida's self-identification as a "conservative," see J. Caputo, ed., *Deconstruction in A Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 9. A good introduction to Derrida's later thought is M. Chérif, *Islam and the West*, trans. L. Fagan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008). For the technical phenomenological account of Derrida's version of the "event of world," see Jacques Derrida, *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. C. Irizarry (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), especially 237, where Derrida speaks of the alterity of an archifacticity "that is not that of an *alter ego*".

system, no tradition that is *without authority*. All we can do is seek the best possible form of power and authority, which is to say, the least bad or the least unjust. This is clear from one of his latest writings, *Voyous* (2003), which offers a meditation on the principles of democracy and sovereignty. Here Derrida develops the somewhat Levinasian idea of democracy as susceptible to the permanence of revolution. This revolution, like most empirical revolutions, can go either way; a “good” idea might have “bad” consequences, a “bad” idea might have “good” consequences. What is “good” or “bad,” however, is sustained and guarded through the “tradition,” i.e., the ruling elite and their institutions.

Although Derrida was certainly a “conservative” in this regard, this does not entail that his idea of a permanent revolution is completely without value. Indeed, the position Derrida develops in *Voyous* borders on the ontological anarchism described previously in this essay. While meditating on the coming and of the event (of world), he mentions the possibility of this happening unconditionally (that is, happening always and everywhere without prior standards or conditions) without at the same time being sovereign. Such an event is unconditional because it allows for no exception, just as the sun rises for everyone—the poor and the rich, the Jew and the Palestinian alike. The event of world for Derrida would be a sovereignty without a (determinate) sovereign.<sup>31</sup>

It is in Jean-Luc Nancy’s thought that the ontological anarchism of the event of world meets with a full-fledged political philosophy. Nancy’s thinking of the event coincides with the distinction we made earlier between things that are manmade and things that are outside our control. The event, Nancy writes, “is not the thing *which* happens, but [...] *the fact* that it happens, the event-ness of the event. [This] event-ness, insofar as it is conceived in terms of the truth of the thing, is distinguished from the phenomenon: [it is] the nonphenomenal truth of the phenomenal itself.”<sup>32</sup> Nancy’s philosophy, which is only indirectly concerned with the basics of phenomenology, can be seen as searching for a politics adequate to the anarchic unfolding of world and history.

For Nancy, ontological anarchism must be understood in the political context of a globalized world that faces a choice: it can either destroy itself through globalized capitalism or save itself by creating a new world-forming able to withstand the test of time. This amounts to finding a mechanism of sorts that will allow us to cope with the sheer fact of existence, an existence

31 Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. M.-A. Brault and M. Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), esp 141ff.

32 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. R. Richardson and A. Byrne (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 161.

without any gods or masters who tell us how to exist or how to “be” our being. Existence itself is an “originary anarchy” which is “by all rights without any right.”<sup>33</sup> It is the fact that we exist in a space between birth and death, the fact that nothing wills us into being or grants us being. There is no overarching principle required to describe the sheer fact of being-in-the-world. Yet this very being-in-the-world is operative in all of us and a politics is needed to negotiate the “being-alongside” of all existences thrown together into the mute materiality of the world. Even if there is no grand design that specifies the truth of this world once and for all, there nonetheless remains some order and *sense* in the world. Nancy singles out the human being as the sense-maker of things, as the one who organizes society and being-together from out of nothing.<sup>34</sup>

It is when Christianity—the Western religion par excellence—and the dynamism and the energy it has given to civilization *disappears* that the sovereignty of this energy *appears* as a concern for the being of world and existence. This concern is properly democratic and principally anarchic; as Bataille says, it is a concern for a “sovereignty that is nothing,” at least nothing determinate or particular. No rulers or authorities govern the very presence of world:

Democracy means [that] value comes only from shared existence insofar it exposes itself to its absence of ultimate sense as its true—and infinite—sense of being. If the people are sovereign, it pertains to them to take hold [of the fact] that sovereignty is nothing. It is not deposited in a single person, single contour, nor carved in any tablet. [Sovereignty] is, simply, what is supreme. Nothing is above it. Neither God nor master. Democracy equals anarchy, in this sense. But anarchy commits to certain actions, operations and struggles, to certain forms that allow one rigorously to maintain the absence of any posited, deposited and imposed *archè*. The power of the people is first of all to foil the *archè*.<sup>35</sup>

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33 Ibid., 48.

34 The various allusions to the Christian narrative make clear that this anarchic event of world is at the core of Nancy’s deconstruction of Christianity. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure. The Deconstruction of Christianity I*, trans. B. Bergo, G. Malenfant, and M. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), e.g., 21–76; and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Adoration: The Deconstruction of Christianity II*, trans. J. McKeane (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 64.

35 Jean-Luc Nancy, *La vérité de la démocratie* (Paris: Galilée, 2008), 56–57. For the English translation, see *The Truth of Democracy*, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

Nancy is more outspoken than Derrida when it comes to his faith in democracy. The fundamental equality issuing from this anarchic sovereignty reduces the role of politics and politician to assuring spaces of equality rather than assuming control of such spaces. In a sense, they do not represent the people so much as the un-representable sovereignty that accompanies the people. They are the placeholders of an undetermined and indeterminate truth that is nonetheless identified in a single figure, system, or proposition that is made available to *everyone*. It is a politics in retreat, a politics that advances the means for people to exist but does not pronounce on the ends of existence.<sup>36</sup>

### New Phenomenology

In what is gradually becoming known as “new phenomenology”—the wave of French phenomenologists in France who came after Heidegger—few philosophers have so meticulously described the event of world as Jean-Yves Lacoste and Claude Romano. Romano’s account of the event can be likened to Marion’s theory of saturated phenomena, although it focuses more on the impersonal nature of its happening. For Marion, God is somehow the guarantor and the guardian of the event of world. For Romano the event remains impersonal: *it* is happening or *it* happens, just as *it* rains or *it* snows.<sup>37</sup> On this point Romano follows Schürmann in his concept of a “non-human facticity”<sup>38</sup>—the fact that there is a world that exists both *prior to* and *after* our own appearance in the world.

Yet for Romano, the event is properly anarchic as well.<sup>39</sup> There is not a single cause that could once and for all explain its advent. Rather, it is through the event that I find myself altered and “reconfigured,” as it were, in its wake. If I happen to be in a car accident, for example, I am obviously not the same as I was before it occurred; indeed, everything will have changed for me in its aftermath. But no one could have foreseen what would happen to me in the car accident. Its “an-archic bursting forth”<sup>40</sup> is such that no could see it coming. Even the necessary conditions for there to be an accident—the fact that I was out, that I was driving, and so on—will never explain the course of events sufficiently: I might have been on the same road, in the same car, at the same

36 Ibid., 60–61.

37 Claude Romano, *Event and World*, trans. S. Mackinlay (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 31, 46.

38 Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 57.

39 Ibid., 38–48.

40 Ibid., 43.

time of day a million times before the accident. For Romano, in fact, there is no such thing as a “course of events.” Rather, the event sets its own course and, in so doing, sets us on a different course as well.

Romano focuses on the phenomenon of *birth* as the site where the impersonal event intersects with the world as well as with my individual personality: “Birth is eminently an event, since being born is precisely not being the measure of the occurring of this event that happens to us without prior measure and that alone gives us the possibility of receiving other events, by initially having us as its destination and thereby conferring a destiny on us.”<sup>41</sup> Romano concludes from this phenomenon that “Being itself is given to us, conferred on us by the event of birth.”<sup>42</sup>

But whereas Romano insists on some separation between “event” and “world,” thus speculating about the priority of some sort of mysterious “Being” (all of a sudden with a capital “B”), I would suggest that no such divide exists. If Being happens, it happens in and *as* world. There is nothing prior to world, just as there is nothing beyond it; its anarchic happening *just is* the event of world even if this event exceeds our ability to “make happen.” In this I side with Jean-Yves Lacoste’s Heideggerian interpretation of the event. Although Lacoste hesitates when it comes to the anarchic unfolding of world, it is quite clear that he regards whatever happens as happening within the horizon of world and that “events” in the world are neither foreseen nor caused. Existence itself contains an “anarchic” variety of phenomena that are all deserving of philosophical attention.<sup>43</sup> There are no hierarchies in Lacoste’s phenomenology; the silent “angst” of the authentic individual merits as much attention as the talkative, inauthentic “they” (*Das Man*).

For Lacoste, as for the other philosophers, we have discussed, taking anarchy seriously requires us to think in terms of fundamental plurality. It is as though the principle of anarchy is itself a principle of plurality: what is real, actual, and valuable for me might not be for you, and vice versa. It is the difference and plurality at the heart of being that phenomenology is concerned with, all the while remaining conscious of the fact that it is we, the human animal and other animals alike, who share in such “being.”<sup>44</sup>

Lacoste’s Heideggerian position critiques the lofty analyses of Marion, who separates “world and being” from “God,” as well as those of Romano, who separates “world and being” from the “event.” In their stead he offers a meticulous

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41 Ibid., 19.

42 Ibid., p. 20.

43 Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Être en danger* (Paris: Cerf, 2011), 258.

44 Ibid., 162.

description and interpretation of the event of world from within the limited but lived space between birth and death. In effect, Lacoste dismisses Marion (though one might wonder whether Romano shouldn't be dismissed on the same grounds) when he says that Marion's distinction between saturated phenomena and simple objects (like tables) is "elegant but rhetorical."<sup>45</sup> There is no real distinction between what happens to me in this world (and whatever happens, happens to me—just as "I" make no sense without my birth, my birth makes no sense without "me") as an object or as an event. Even if I cannot sit at the essence of a table, I will never sit at the table twice as the same person, nor will it be the same table at which I sit. As Lacoste puts it, "the 'once and for all' is" phenomenologically and *strictly speaking* "the condition of all appearances."<sup>46</sup> No matter how much I see my mother, for example, it will always be the first (or the last) and, ultimately, a different encounter than the one before. If the event belongs to being and to world, we must first make sense of the anarchic appearance of (our) being and (our) world and not speculate about "Being," "God," and the like.

### Conclusion: Of a Principle That Does Not Reign

There are two important conclusions that can be drawn from the phenomenology of an anarchic event of world. The first is a rather negative one—namely, that the event of world risks reducing human beings (and all other beings) to mere recipients of "events." Perhaps it is no surprise that this danger surfaces in Marion's phenomenological theology more than in the other philosophies I have discussed since, for Marion, the human being is ultimately just a clerk, passively registering the event of the saturated phenomena that is happening to him or her. At times Marion even reduces the human being to a tool or instrument of the event—a "witness" of saturation that "lights up as on a control panel at the very instant and each time the information he should render phenomenal"<sup>47</sup> shows up in phenomenality.

It is clear that the anarchic phenomenology of the event is at the antipodes of the anarchist tradition. Rather than providing an empowering, revolutionary account of the human being, it ends up describing an utter passivity which paralyzes rather than enables. In the place of such pervertibility, to use Derrida's expression, one needs to focus on the "perfectibility" of our

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45 Cf. *ibid.*, 40–42.

46 *Ibid.*, 41.

47 Marion, *Being Given*, 217–218.

institutions. This is the second and more positive consequence of an anarchic event of world: it is a happening that prevents stable authority from existing and ensures that, if authority does exist, it comes as goes alongside every other finite phenomenon. The event of world instructs us that things can change because things *are* change. What seems “necessary” is most of the time only provisional, temporary, and contingent. It is to such a view of liberation that the phenomenologies described in this chapter might contribute. The anarchic event of world, its mere coming to pass, points to the “relativity of all beliefs.”<sup>48</sup> Traces of it can be found in Ludwig Binswanger’s “old phenomenology” of love, which speaks to the radical possibility of balance between passivity and activity, between what is necessary and what is merely provisional. On the one hand, Binswanger points to the “relativity” of all beliefs by insisting that the phenomenon of love, though presencing differently in all the epochs of being, is constantly being renewed; forms of love that exist today, for example, contribute to the overall essence of love and enlarge the phenomenon, and no one form of love can exhaust the phenomenon once and for all. On the other hand, Binswanger describes an ontology of being that is close to Levinas, insofar as our *turned* to others in general matters more than our actual attention to any particular other before us. For Binswanger, the very presencing of love in being is what constitutes (and is necessary for the constitution of) the “event of world,” even though the empirical forms it takes vary from epoch to epoch and are therefore only temporary. Following Goethe, Binswanger’s phenomenology posits love as the one principle that does not reign.

This notion helps to both encourage the relativity of all beliefs within the fundamental uncertainty and “passing” of being/s as well as to enable us to protest against fanaticisms of every kind wherein the “relativity of belief” is no longer sustained. In short, it is not always the new phenomenologies that show us the way forward. If anything, this contribution hopes to have demonstrated that anarchism and phenomenology have been allies, if only tangentially, for a long while now and that phenomenology provides useful resources for envisioning an alternative anarchist reality without domination.

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48 Ludwig Binswanger, *Grundformen und Erkenntnis des menschlichen Daseins* (Heidelberg: Asanger Verlag, 1993), 598, referring to Dilthey’s *Der Aufbau der Geschichtliche Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*.

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# Anarchism and Marxism

*Lucien van der Walt*

## Introduction

Any analysis of the relationship between Marxism and anarchism immediately confronts several problems. One is that, while there is a fair amount of scholarly literature on the topic, it tends to be uneven.<sup>1</sup> Many studies have focused on the conflict between Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin in the 1870s, with a few asides on earlier and later conflicts, but very few have compared anarchism and Marxism as evolving traditions. Consequently, there is very little discussion of how later Marxists like Mao Zedong differ from the anarchists. Another problem is that many analyses are quite schematic and simplified, eliding deeper issues (e.g., the extent to which Marxists and anarchists differ on basic concepts like “class” and the “state”) and concentrating first and foremost on strategic differences (most obviously, the question of whether the state can or should be wielded by the oppressed). Without discounting the importance of strategic positions, the fact remains that they are closely linked to larger analyses of economy, society, and history and, as such, an accurate understanding of the differences between Marxists and anarchists in this regard requires an equally accurate understanding of the ways these two traditions understand (for example) the basic dynamics of capitalism.

A further problem has been a long history of debates between the two currents marked by tendencies towards caricature and misunderstanding. Neither side is blameless; both have produced sectarian polemics and critiques lacking intellectual rigor.<sup>2</sup> Marxists have correctly objected to anarchist criticisms that reduce Marxist thought to functionalism, scientism, and a teleological view

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1 Key texts include J. Clark, “Marx, Bakunin and the Problem of Social Transformation,” *Telos* 42 (1979): 80–97; A.W. Gouldner, “Marx’s Last Battle: Bakunin and the First International,” *Theory and Society* 11, no. 6 (1982): 853–884; Daniel Guérin, “Marxism and Anarchism,” in *For Anarchism: History, Theory and Practice*, ed. D. Goodway (London: Routledge, 1989), 109–125; D. Miller, *Anarchism* (London: J.M. Dent, 1984), chapter 6.

2 Despite some insightful points, the anarchist Warlaam Tcherkesoff’s “Pages of Socialist History” is so hostile to Marxism that it denies Marx all originality and insight, going so far as to claim, very unconvincingly, that the *Communist Manifesto* was itself plagiarized. See W. Tcherkesoff, *Pages of Socialist History: Teachings and Acts of Social Democracy* (New York: C.B. Cooper, 1902), 55–66.

of history.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, anarchist critiques of Marxism sometimes demonstrate little familiarity with key elements of Marxist theory or of key debates within Marxism itself. On the other hand, Marxists often critique straw-man versions of anarchism.<sup>4</sup> A recent account of syndicalism, for example, argues that its stress on the “necessity and desirability of class struggle” shows that syndicalism was rooted in Marxist rather than anarchist politics.<sup>5</sup> This not only ignores the fact that anarchists like Bakunin emphasized class struggle<sup>6</sup> but also that syndicalism itself was pioneered by anarchists from 1860s and, for this reason, has always been a *variant* of anarchism rather than an altogether separate current.<sup>7</sup> The tendency of many Marxist critiques of anarchism to focus on marginal, unrepresentative strands to the exclusion of the ideas and movements that have been, by any measure, central to anarchism—viz., anarchist-communism, anarcho-syndicalism, and revolutionary syndicalism—also frustrates debates.<sup>8</sup>

A more fruitful and illuminating debate between the two currents requires us to move beyond the “non-debate between Marxist and anarchist tendencies on the revolutionary left.”<sup>9</sup> This chapter aims at developing a more systematic exposition of the strategic and theoretical differences between the anarchist and Marxist traditions; to move the discussion beyond a narrow focus on the Marx-Bakunin conflict, by considering a wider range of periods, writers and debates; and to unpack more fully the theoretical issues at play. In so doing, it

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3 See, for example, D. Harvey, “Listen Anarchist!” (2016), <http://davidharvey.org/2015/06/listen-anarchist-by-david-harvey/>

4 See, for example, V.I. Lenin, “Anarchism and Socialism” [1901], in *Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961), 327–330.

5 R. Darlington, “Syndicalism and the Influence of Anarchism in France, Italy and Spain,” *Anarchist Studies* 17, no. 2 (2009): 46–47.

6 See I. McKay, “Another View: Syndicalism, Anarchism and Marxism,” *Anarchist Studies* 20, no. 1 (2012): 91.

7 A fuller discussion of this issue falls outside the scope of this chapter. For the argument that syndicalism is an outgrowth of anarchism, see, *inter alia*, McKay, “Another View: Syndicalism, Anarchism and Marxism,” 89–105; W. Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves: Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913–23* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 2–22.

8 I discuss this problem “Counterpower, Participatory Democracy, Revolutionary Defence: Debating *Black Flame*, Revolutionary Anarchism and Historical Marxism,” *International Socialism: A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Theory* 130 (2011): 193–207.

9 P. Blackledge, “Anarchism, Syndicalism and Strategy: A Reply to Lucien van der Walt,” *International Socialism: A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Theory* 131 (2011), <http://isj.org.uk/anarchism-syndicalism-and-strategy-a-reply-to-lucien-van-der-walt/>

seeks to clearly define the boundaries of the Marxist and anarchist traditions in specific relation to classical Marxism (rather than other versions) and to elucidate various debates over historical materialism, the role of the states, the nature of class struggle, and other topics. A major thrust of the argument is that anarchism's social analysis is far richer than often recognized and may be illuminated through a proper exposition of the Marxism/anarchism conflict.

### The Meaning of "Marxism" and "Anarchism"

In raising the question of what exactly is meant by "Marxism" and "anarchism," it is not particularly useful to state the truism that there are many "Marxisms" and many "anarchisms," as this merely begs the question of what makes something classifiable as a "Marxism" or an "anarchism" in the first place. Michael Burawoy provides a partial solution, suggesting that it is helpful to think of Marxism as a "tradition," the development of which is similar to that of a tree. Rooted in particular ideas, a trunk arises with branches, twigs, and foliage, each of which has its own sub-branches. etc. and its overall shape develops as the product of both an intrinsic internal logic as well as external pressures.<sup>10</sup> If there are many "Marxisms," accordingly they nonetheless share common features even as they develop in different ways. The metaphor can be extended: there may be many "Marxisms," but not all "Marxisms" are equal. In terms of their weight and importance, some branches are far larger and stronger than others because they are closer to the trunk; others wither; still others, I would add, develop in ways that ultimately leads them to fall off the tree altogether, perhaps setting down new roots. (I will return to this issue in the next section in more detail.) This approach, I suggest, is equally useful for thinking about anarchism as a tradition. The difficulty in both cases lies in identifying the roots from which the ideological and organizational lineages of these traditions grow.

Burawoy locates these in the "fundamental" texts of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels,<sup>11</sup> but it is by no means clear which texts deserve this designation let alone which parts of these texts are taken to contain essential components. He gives special attention to Marxism's historical materialism, including its vision of a series of class-structured modes of production driven forward by internal contradictions and which generate the forces necessary for their

10 M. Burawoy, "Marxism after Communism," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 2 (2000): 154.

11 Ibid.

own transcendence, as well as the state and other structures generated and conditioned by these modes. He also emphasizes the Marxist concept of an inevitable transition from capitalism to socialism that arises from inherent contradictions in the capitalist mode of production, as well as the resolution of these conflicts through the evolution of capitalism's "grave-diggers"—i.e., the working class transformed into a political party that can seize state power, nationalize the means of production, abolish the class system itself, and, ultimately, usher in the final stage of communism.<sup>12</sup> In this schema, state power is an instrument by which one class dominates another; states only exist in class society and, as classes fade away, the state fades too.

The classical Marxist emphasis on the formation of a revolutionary party and the nationalization of the means of production as core aspects of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is one way of understanding the Marxist political program. By "classical Marxism," I mean the main historical Marxist tradition that runs from the Communist League through the pre-war German Social Democratic Party, and from there to the Communist Parties and their Trotskyist rivals. This statist model did not start with Lenin or Stalin but can be found in the *Communist Manifesto*, the 1872 program for the International Workingmen's Association (or "First International," 1864–1877),<sup>13</sup> and the work of Kautsky and other members of the Socialist International (or "Second International," 1889–1914)

There is a direct and real continuity between the "fundamental" texts of Marx and Engels and the Marxist tradition as a whole, including its classical form. It is, of course, possible to elaborate more democratic versions of Marxism by redefining the "party" in a way that includes all radical workers and/or institutions like *soviets*; by re-conceptualizing the party's relation to the working class; or by construing the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as self-government—all

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12 Ibid., 157–159. This same work, it should be noted, includes elements that foreshadow Burawoy's subsequent attempts to elaborate a "sociological Marxism" that dispenses with the primacy of production, the necessity of revolution (including the seizure of state power by a Marxist party), and the abolition of the commodity form in favor of struggles by "civil society" to "regulate" states and markets through reformist measures alongside localized experiments. What keeps this new theory "Marxist" is unclear. See, e.g., M. Burawoy, "Marxism after Polanyi," in *Marxisms in the 21st Century: Crisis, Critique and Struggle*, eds. V. Satgar and M. Williams (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014), 35–52.

13 K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* [1848] (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), 40, 55–56; H. Gerth, ed., *The First International: Minutes of the Hague Conference of 1872* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 216–217, 285–286.

of which are common strategies in Council Communism.<sup>14</sup> It is not possible, however, to set up a sharp distinction between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and the larger history of Marxism, including the history of classical Marxism, on the other. This attempt is surprisingly common. Much has been made of Marx's reported statement that he was not a Marxist, but this has been taken out of context. Marx was actually referring to certain French socialists who claimed fidelity to his views, remarking that if *their* views were Marxist, then "I myself am not a Marxist."<sup>15</sup>

Another approach holds that Marx and Engels have been misread or betrayed by "more or less faithless successors."<sup>16</sup> This approach fails on several grounds—namely, its quasi-religious reverence for revelatory texts and concern with "faithless" interpreters; its failure to address direct and obvious continuities between the works of Marx and Engels and their "successors"; and its ahistorical approach. Just as the historical record of Christianity cannot be judged in abstraction by selected quotations from the Gospels and epistles or reduced to the acts of Jesus Christ and the early Church, neither can the history of Marxism reasonably be reduced to an exegesis of Marx's or Engels' texts and lives.<sup>17</sup> Marxism must be understood not in terms of a few infallible texts but as a historical force; it is absurd to speak of the correct reading of Marxist writings "while keeping quiet about what the doctrine has become in history."<sup>18</sup> The dominant current—the mainstream of that historical force—has been that of classical Marxism, which comprises the great majority of individual Marxists, organized Marxist movements, and Marxist thought. There is, accordingly, no reason why Marxism should not be judged in large part by the record of classical Marxism, the giant branch of the trunk, the most firmly anchored.

Understood this way, Marxism is a tradition that includes an analytical-scientific dimension, a political-activist dimension, and, at least implicitly, a moral-ethical branch dimension on a commitment to the comprehensive

14 See, e.g., M. Shipway, "Council Communism," in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, eds. M. Rubel and J. Crump (London: Macmillan, 1987), 104–126.

15 "If anything is certain, it is that I myself am not a Marxist" (*"Ce qu'il y a de certain c'est que moi, je ne suis pas Marxiste"*), quoted in "Letter from Friedrich Engels to Eduard Bernstein" [2–3 Nov. 1882], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 46 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1989), 356. On the context, see B.H. Moss, *The Origins of the French Labor Movement: The Socialism of Skilled Workers, 1830–1914* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1976), 107, 116.

16 Cf. Guérin, "Marxism and Anarchism."

17 C. Castoriadis, "The Fate of Marxism," in *The Anarchist Papers*, ed. D. Roussopoulos (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2001), 77.

18 Castoriadis, "The Fate of Marxism," 77.

development of individual capacities. This does not mean that there were not profound ambiguities and contradictions in Marxist thought—including classical Marxism—between the deterministic, economic and teleological approach of “scientific” Marxism and the “critical” Marxist emphasis on human agency and will.<sup>19</sup> Running alongside the Marxism of necessary historical stages socialist inevitability is one that stresses the active formation of a revolutionary party; the importance of strategy and tactics; and the choices of the proletarian-dictatorial state as enabling the necessary link between capitalism and the end goal of history.

These tensions should not be seen as absolute—the material base, after all, is comprised of people who exercise agency within structured constraints and around structured interests.<sup>20</sup> Nor should they be understood as equivalent to the tensions between classical Marxism and libertarian Marxism. Just as Council Communism displays certain tendencies toward determinism and teleology, so, too, does classical Marxism contain strong elements of voluntarism. Examples of the latter include Kautsky’s emphasis on the role of correct revolutionary tactics and strategy;<sup>21</sup> Lenin’s stress on the revolutionary party as the critical agent of change; Trotsky’s insistence that “Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer,”<sup>22</sup> Stalin’s argument that the Soviet regime could build “socialism in one country” by avoiding the fetishization of economic laws and deliberately creating “socialist forms of economy ... from scratch,”<sup>23</sup> Mao Zedong’s stress on rural peasant-based “protracted people’s war” as a substitute for urban proletarian mobilization, Ché Guevara’s *foquismo*, etc.

Applying a similar line of reasoning to anarchism also begs the question of which texts are fundamental, and which ideas essential, to the anarchist tradition. This issue can be addressed somewhat obliquely by considering existing debates over how best to define anarchism. Space precludes a full engagement with this topic, but several major approaches may be noted and briefly assessed. The first maintains that anarchism is indefinable by its very nature, its core features and boundaries ever in flux. This is patently illogical insofar as it entails concrete definitional features yet denies that such features are

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- 19 A.W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 33–88.
  - 20 K. Kautsky, *The Road to Power* (Chicago: Samuel Bloch, 1909), 33–41.
  - 21 *Ibid.*, 60.
  - 22 L. Trotsky, *The Lessons of October* [1924] (London, Bookmarks, 1987), 72.
  - 23 J. Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* [1951] (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), 5.

possible. In any case, partisans of this approach do not consistently apply it; since none of them, to my knowledge, have ever characterized Stalin or Hitler as anarchists, it is obvious that very definite core features and boundaries are indeed in place.

A second approach defines anarchism as a venerable current of revolt that extends back into the mists of Asian and European antiquity. This approach, which originated in the 1890s, was adopted by many notable self-identified anarchists, including Peter Kropotkin.<sup>24</sup> Its main weakness is that it includes an assortment of figures and movements that share little in common and, as a result, it struggles to provide clear or consistent definitional criteria for “anarchism.” Major differences are downplayed and the criteria for inclusion seem arbitrary and opaque. The same weakness befalls the third approach, which defines anarchism as a methodology of struggle that aims to build decentralized, prefigurative movements by means of direct action. This approach is implicit or explicit in much of the recent literature on anarchist influences on Western “anti-globalization” movements.<sup>25</sup> The problem here is that organizing styles of this sort are not unique to anarchists nor invariably rooted in anarchist traditions, in which case it is unclear on what grounds they should be seen as intrinsically anarchist or, conversely, how anarchism might be distinguished from other currents that employ them.

The fourth approach, in contrast, posits a clear, fixed, and uniform definition: anarchists are those who seek to “negate the State,” even if they disagree on precisely what this entails or how it might be accomplished.<sup>26</sup> Minimalist definitions of this sort were developed by identifying common elements in a range of movements that have been called “anarchist,” but since the selection of which movements to include is quite arbitrary, the inference is questionable.<sup>27</sup> In any case, a consistent application of this definition of anarchism would logically entail the inclusion of Marxism, as it explicitly advocates the “withering

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24 See, for example, Peter Kropotkin, “Anarchism” [1905] in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets: A Collection of Writings by Peter Kropotkin*, ed. R. Baldwin (New York: Dover, 1970), 287.

25 See, for example, U. Gordon, “Anarchism Reloaded,” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12, no. 1 (2007): 32–33.

26 One of the main originators of this approach was the German jurist Paul Eltzbacher. See his *Anarchism: Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy* [1900] (London: Freedom Press, 1960), 189, 194, 201.

27 M. Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and Nineteenth-century European Anarchism* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979), 16–19.



away” of the state.<sup>28</sup> The *Communist Manifesto* argued that the final communist society would be stateless,<sup>29</sup> and Lenin asserted that the Bolsheviks “... do not at all differ from the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the *aim*.”<sup>30</sup> Either these views (and the currents they represent) must be included, in which case the inability of the definition to identify the differentiating features of anarchism is revealed, or else they must be excluded, in which case the necessity—and implicit application—of additional definitional criteria is made clear. Since they are always excluded, and since there are no grounds for excluding them, the fallacy of this definition is obvious.

Significantly, the scholarship that defined anarchism as anti-statism—which originated in the early 1900s—was a *response* to the emergence of a self-defined anarchist movement that “initially appeared to contemporaries to be a new phenomenon,” and a “general awareness of an ‘anarchist’ position” dates to the late 1870s.<sup>31</sup> It was this new movement itself, moreover, that began to promulgate the myth of an ancient anarchist tradition in the 1890s. Understood in context, the basically propagandistic function of this mythologizing is revealed as an obvious attempt to drape an embattled current in the clothes of venerable lineage while simultaneously providing an important impetus for vague or loose definitions of anarchism. But just as nationalist myths do not provide reliable guides to national history, the same is true of anarchist myths in relation to anarchist history.

The “new phenomenon” of anarchism emerged within the First International—that is, within a key sector of the rising socialist and working class milieu of the mid- to late 1800s. Even anarchist mythology concedes that anarchism originated as an organized movement in this context. It is reasonable, accordingly, to define anarchism in terms of the ideas of this movement, and, more narrowly, to understand its essential positions through the arguments of its foremost figures: Bakunin and Kropotkin. It was through debates

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28 For example, J. Stalin, “The Results Of The First Five-Year Plan” [1933], in *Leninism: Selected Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1942), 366–378; Z. Mao, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship: In Commemoration of the Twenty-Eighth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China” [1949], in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*, vol. 4 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971), 372.

29 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 40, 55–56.

30 V.I. Lenin, “The State and Revolution: The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution” [1917], in *Selected Works in Three Volumes* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 257, 281. Emphasis in original.

31 Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 16.

and struggles within the First International that anarchism was first constituted as a distinct current and that syndicalism was developed as part of the anarchist repertoire. The public personas of Marx and Engels stressed the “scientific” character of their thought; indeed, it was on precisely this basis that they distinguished themselves from the utopian socialists. However, their activities within the First International—first against the Proudhonists, then the Blanquists, then the Bakuninists—demonstrated very clearly that actual Marxist political work involved a great deal of emphasis on agency and choice. In the lead up to The Hague Congress of 1872, the Marxists actively campaigned on behalf of their own positions in various ways, seeking to expel Bakunin from, and impose their program within, the International.

None of this campaigning was necessary if impersonal historical processes built into the capitalist mode of production ensured the ultimate identity of Marxism, socialism, and the proletarian movement. That Marxist victory was by no means foreordained, and that anarchism was a rival current of great historical importance, was clearly demonstrated by two subsequent developments. First, Marx and Engels suffered a crushing defeat in 1872 when The Hague Congress was repudiated by almost every section of the International at the subsequent anarchist-led St. Imier Congress;<sup>32</sup> and second, anarchists steamed ahead to become by the early 1900s the “dominant element in the self-consciously internationalist radical Left,” the main vehicle of global opposition to industrial capitalism, autocracy, latifundism, and imperialism,” an immense “gravitational force.”<sup>33</sup> This influence extended outside the West into much of the colonial and postcolonial world, at least in the 1920s, where Marxism was of little consequence prior to Lenin.

The anarchist tradition involves ideological and organizational continuity with the anarchists of the First International—that is, the first anarchists—and in this way may be said to have clear boundaries. On this view, the “fundamental” texts of anarchism are the anarchist writings of Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin, insofar as these form the roots from which the trunk, branches, twigs and foliage of the anarchist tradition arise. It follows, accordingly, that many bodies of thought that are sometimes labeled “anarchist” in both anarchist mythology and scholarly work do not actually belong to this tradition.

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32 See, for example, R. Berthier, *Social-Democracy and Anarchism in the International Workers' Association, 1864–1877*, trans. A.W. Zurbrugg (London: Merlin Press, 2015), 66–130 and G.M. Stekloff, *The History of the First International* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1928), part 2, chapters 3–4.

33 B. Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination* (London: Verso, 2006), 2, 54.

These include Godwinite utilitarianism, Stirnerite individualism, Proudhonist mutualism, Tolstoyan Christianity, and anti-industrial “primitivism.”

While there is no question that Proudhonist mutualism helped nourish anarchism’s roots—as did Marxism<sup>34</sup>—anarchism itself was a “Proudhonism ... greatly developed and taken to its ultimate conclusion.”<sup>35</sup> Proudhonist mutualism argued, essentially, that the development of a non-capitalist sector of independent artisans, farmers, cooperatives, and non-profit banks would facilitate a peaceful transition to socialism (or, more precisely, to a form of what would nowadays be called market socialism). Bakunin insisted this was “impossible” since the mass of the people had already been expropriated by “monopoly capital” and “vast landed property” and so could scarcely hope to establish enterprises that could survive, let alone displace, the “all-powerful competition”<sup>36</sup> of the “despotic, oligarchic monopoly” of big business and the banks.<sup>37</sup>

As with Marxism, there is some room for debate on what constitutes the “fundamental” texts of Bakunin and Kropotkin as well and which parts of those texts should be viewed as essential. In various works, I have drawn special attention to anarchism’s class-centered analysis of society.<sup>38</sup> In its most sophisticated form, this analysis eschews economism and understands class in turns of interdependent relations of domination and production, partly embodied in the state, that help generate and reinforce a series of oppressive social and economic inequalities among people without always being their primary causes. It also understands the transition from class society to socialism in terms of the rapid replacement of those institutions which foster social and economic inequality (e.g., class, state, and capital) with generalized collectivization and coordinated self-management of the means of administration, coercion, and production. This transition is not inscribed in the trajectory of specific social

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34 M. Bakunin, *Marxism, Freedom and the State*, ed. K.J. Kenafick (London: Freedom Press, 1990), 15.

35 M. Bakunin, “The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State” [1871], in *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*, ed. S. Dolgoff (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), 263.

36 M. Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy” [1873], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 345.

37 M. Bakunin, “On the Cooperative Movement” [n.d.], in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, ed. S. Dolgoff (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980), 399.

38 See, for example, van der Walt, “Counterpower, Participatory Democracy, Revolutionary Defence,” 193–207; L. van der Walt, “Anarchism/ Syndicalism as a Vision, Strategy and Experience of Bottom-up Socialist Democracy: A Reply to Daryl Glaser,” *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies* 40, no. 2 (2013): 339–349; L. van der Walt, “Reclaiming Syndicalism: From Spain to South Africa to Global Labour Today,” *Global Labour Journal* 5, no. 2 (2014): 239–252.

formations but is fundamentally a *potential* outcome that depends upon adequate levels of prefigurative class-based self-organization, conscientization, and revolutionary class struggle.

Understood in this way, the anarchist tradition is characterized simultaneously by an analytical-scientific dimension, a political-activist dimension, and, quite explicitly, a moral-ethical dimension centered on a commitment to the complete freedom of the individual through the creation of cooperative, democratic, and egalitarian relations. Like Marxism, anarchism involves a coherent set of ideas; much of its apparent incoherence is an intellectual artefact of vague definitions that seek to encompass a wide range of mutually contradictory ideas, movements and thinkers.

This is not to say that there are no divisions within anarchism. One such division is between two main strategic currents—viz., “insurrectionist” anarchism (which views reforms as illusory, considers movements like unions as reformist and authoritarian, and emphasizes propaganda by the deed as means of provoking a spontaneous revolutionary upsurge) and “mass” anarchism (which stresses the piecemeal building up of mass movements, typically through struggles around immediate issues and reforms, with anarchists participating in such movements to radicalize them and transform them into levers of revolutionary change). Syndicalism—a radical trade union model that envisages bottom-up unions that educate and mobilize workers for immediate gains in the present and workplace take-overs in the future—is an application of mass anarchism.

### Not All “Marxisms” and “Anarchisms” are Equal

Although Marxism and anarchism have “identical preoccupations” and are, in fact, “very close” in many respects, there are important differences in their analyses and underlying premises that lead to very “different conclusions.”<sup>39</sup> Daniel Guérin captured this situation with his usual lucidity, describing the relationship between anarchist and Marxist as that of “brother and enemy.”<sup>40</sup> The division, in other words, is situated within the broader working class, socialist family; both traditions were born in the nineteenth century as part of the great rise of the modern working class, and both traditions “at the start, drank at the same proletarian spring.”<sup>41</sup> But despite their common background, their

39 Berthier, *Social-Democracy and Anarchism*, pp. 162–163.

40 D. Guérin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 35.

41 Guérin, “Marxism and Anarchism,” 119.

entanglements and similarities, the two traditions have grown apart in theory as well as in practice.

Just as the Marxist “tree” includes councilist Marxist branches and classical Marxist branches, so the anarchist tree includes insurrectionist branches and mass anarchist branches. And just as classical Marxism is a far larger and stronger branch of the Marxist tree than councilist Marxism, so, too, is mass anarchist a far larger and stronger branch of the anarchist tree than the insurrectionist branch. In short, although there are many “Marxisms” and many “anarchisms,” they are not all of equal importance. Historically, the dominant current in Marxism—which includes the majority of individual Marxists, organized Marxist movements, and Marxist writings—has been classical Marxism, the major themes of which are capturing state power, revolutionary dictatorship, the nationalization of means of production, centralized state planning, and the forcible suppression of counter-revolutionary forces. By contrast, the historically dominant current in anarchism—which includes the majority of individual anarchists, organized anarchist movements, and anarchist writings—has been mass anarchism, including syndicalism. There is some debate over the key figures of the canon of mass anarchism beyond Bakunin and Kropotkin, but it should certainly include Piotr Arshinov, Jaime Balius, Kōtoku Shūsui, Li Pei Kan (Ba Jin), Liu Sifu (Shifu), Errico Malatesta, Ricardo Flores Magón, Nestor Ivanovich Makhno, Lucy Parsons, Rudolph Rocker, and Shin Ch’aeho.

Unsurprisingly, the anarchist critique of Marxism has been historically directed at classical Marxism, which, by any reasonable measure, has been the dominant strand running from Marx and Engels, via figures like Kautsky, to Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, Ché Guevara, Ho Chi Minh, Samora Machel, Joe Slovo, etc. This is the Marxism that created Marxist states, the Marxism that shaped the twentieth century. Within itself, this Marxism bears the same tensions between structure and agency, determinism and openness, “scientific” and “critical” Marxism, that exist in the Marxist tradition as a whole.

What the anarchists engaged was the main historical lineage of actually-existing Marxism and what it represented; there is no obvious reason to question whether this tradition constitutes the “real” Marxist tradition, let alone to subordinate it to minor branches on the Marxist tree. If the anarchists did not engage “real” Marxism in their critiques, then neither did most Marxists. Those concepts indelibly associated with the history of Marxism, no less than the consistently repressive character of Marxist regimes, are a consequence of the Marxist tradition itself and cannot be explained away by reference to misreading and other contingent factors. As such, this chapter will not engage with every possible permutation of Marxism, but only with the mainstream

of the Marxist tradition. To the extent that other Marxisms share, on the one hand, core analytical features of classical Marxism (e.g., historical materialism, a teleological and stageist theory of history, an economistic understanding of historical stages and classes, etc.) or, on the other hand, the program of classical Marxism (e.g., the revolutionary party, the workers state, nationalization, centralized state planning, etc.) the following also applies to those variants.

### Historical Materialism, States and Classes

The public Marx, stressing the “scientific” character of his theory, presented the “social world as imposing itself on persons, rather than being a fluid medium open to human intervention,” with capitalism the latest “stage in a social evolution *destined* to give rise to another, higher society—socialism.”<sup>42</sup> Since that inevitable transition involved a (Marxist) political party taking state power, this effectively entailed the inevitable victory, due to the very motion of history, of the Marxist program. In practice, of course, Marx acted in ways that belied this confident projection—for example, fighting against rival left currents, as in his failed effort to expel Bakunin from the First International in 1872<sup>43</sup>—but this deterministic and teleological analysis was central to his polemics against anarchists, utopian socialists, and others.

Within this model, Marx viewed history as a series of successive stages, each characterized by a dominant mode of production, that evolves through a contradiction between relations and forces of production. Relations and forces of production provide the economic base from which a superstructure of culture, law, philosophy, and politics—including the state—arise in accordance with the needs of the base and in support of its reproduction. The relations of production, in class-based modes, are relations between owners and non-owners of the means of production. In this model, “All moral theories are the *product*, in the last analysis, of the *economic stage* which society reached at that particular epoch.”<sup>44</sup> The continual expansion of the forces of production was initially assisted, but then contradicted, by extant relations of production. This initiates

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42 Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms*, 32, 41. Emphasis in original.

43 Although Marxist narratives present Marx as victorious, the fateful 1872 congress of the International was repudiated by almost every section, Bakunin was vindicated by the reconstituted International, and Marx was left with a small rump based in New York that soon withered and died.

44 F. Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* [1893] (Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1917), 90–91, 94–95. Emphasis in original.

a revolutionary shift to a new mode, the features of which emerge within the old mode; each new mode has its own specific combination of distinctive relations and forces of production, and in each case, the “changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.”<sup>45</sup>

Despite subsequent qualifications—notably Engels’ statement that the base was only the “ultimate explanation” of the superstructure, the site of “final causes” only in the “last analysis”<sup>46</sup>—the production-centered, economy-centered model remained fundamentally unchanged. Classes were relations of production based on ownership; phases of history were characterized by dominant modes of production; contradictions existed between forces and relations of production as well as within relations of production themselves; the state was the instrument of the economically dominant class, etc. Stating that the base is only determinant in the “final analysis” allows space for autonomy in the superstructure, but still asserts, rather than demonstrates, that the base is the “ultimate explanation,” rather than just one sphere of central causes, the primacy of which is historically *contingent*. It does not seriously consider that the so-called superstructure can have fundamental and independent effects on the base, arising from *irreducible* and distinctive dynamics located outside of the base.

Although a minority of anarchists and syndicalists embraced Marx’s and Engels’ materialist conception of history almost uncritically, often in its crudest forms,<sup>47</sup> Bakunin and Kropotkin specifically rejected core elements of this approach. Their criticisms did not question *whether* economic factors were important (they are evidently central to most situations); rather, they proceeded from the notion that the relative importance of economic factors in a given situation needed to be established, rather than their primacy assumed. This entails many of the critiques of economic determinism indicated in the preceding paragraph, albeit situated in an alternative class-centred but non-reductionist social theory that emphasizes contingency, agency and multiple sites of inequality.

Although Bakunin famously declared himself a “materialist,”<sup>48</sup> he evidently understood this different from Marx, as he insisted that Marx’s theory ignored “other factors in history, such as the ever-present reaction of political, juridical

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45 Ibid. See also K. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859] (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 20–21.

46 Ibid.

47 See, for example, W.D. Haywood and F. Bohm, *Industrial Socialism* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1911), 56.

48 M. Bakunin, “God and the State” [1871], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 236, 238.

and religious institutions on the economic situation.”<sup>49</sup> These “factors” and “institutions” continually had real and independent effects, including upon the base. For example, political cultures played an important role, “even apart from and independent of the economic conditions in each country,” in shaping the “temperament” and “particular character” of peoples and affected by the “intensity of the spirit of revolt.”<sup>50</sup> Such “factors” and “institutions” need not be reducible to, or even arise from, any economic basis and, moreover, their operations cannot be assumed as a function of economic development.

To elaborate on this point: what Marxism calls bourgeois-democratic revolutions against feudalism can be explained, fairly easily, in Marx’s and Engels’ historical material framework. Because the bourgeoisie arose from within a new, expanding mode of production, so did the corresponding capitalist state, the “dictatorship of the bourgeoisie,” enable it to explode the feudal mode. But what classical Marxism calls proletarian-socialist revolutions scarcely fit: the proletariat has neither means of production, nor is it based in a new mode. Therefore, the proletarian-dictatorial state reflects nothing immanent; rather, it *creates* the new socialist mode of production via expropriation, state planning, and the military defense of these processes.

According to Bakunin, the state has its own irreducible dynamics and characteristics. It was, firstly, a highly centralized institution of coercion and administration that necessarily concentrated power in the hands of a small state elite.<sup>51</sup> A strong state could have “only one solid foundation: military and bureaucratic centralization.”<sup>52</sup> It is precisely the centralized, hierarchical structure of the state that renders it impervious to majoritarian control; by its very nature, the state is a form of governance by minorities. If the whole population could “stand at the head of the government,” then there would be “no government, no state, but, if there is to be a state there will be those who are ruled and those that are slaves.”<sup>53</sup>

Secondly, the need for a “solid foundation” in (“bureaucratic”) administrative and (“military”) coercive centralization is deeply embedded in the competitive dynamics of the interstate system, which imposes upon every state—including nominally socialist ones—an iron logic of competing for control over territories and populations that parallels (but clearly precedes) the competitive logic of capitalism. This geopolitical rivalry, Bakunin insisted, impels states “to

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49 M. Bakunin, “Letter to *La Liberté*” [1872], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 281–282.

50 *Ibid.*, 282–283.

51 *Ibid.*, 281; Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 330.

52 *Ibid.*, 337.

53 *Ibid.*, 330.



exist not on paper but in fact, and not at the mercy of neighboring states but independently,” including by being “invasive, aggressive, conquering.”<sup>54</sup>

This situation implies, thirdly, that the state wields administrative and coercive resources that give it both irreducible sources of power, as well as intrinsic imperatives, independently of the demands of economically powerful groups. Although the optimal development of the forces of production benefits state elites, the state itself is not an agent of such groups and can and does act contrary to their interests, including in ways that are economically damaging. For anarchists, the Marxist claim that the state is a body of armed men defending class rule is, essentially, correct, but the Marxist explanation for this situation is not. The state is no mere instrument or executive committee of the capitalists, since it has its own irreducible sources of power and internal dynamics, its own drive for sovereignty (“to exist not on paper but in fact ... independently”), and control over its own territory and people (“an invasive, aggressive, conquering state”).

This explains both the state’s support of capitalists *as well as* its simultaneous autonomy from them. Although states both ancient and modern have deliberately promoted economic development, this is the result of a *convergence* between the interests of state elites and economic elites. The modern state aids capitalists, for example, not because it is their tool but because it shares their interest in maintaining revenue streams and elite control. Strong modern states need strong economies to fund, through mechanisms such as taxation, the administrative and coercive apparatus, while capitalists need strong states that can provide the administrative and coercive resources that enable capital accumulation.

In the modern period, Kropotkin writes, “State ... and capitalism are inseparable concepts” that are “bound together ... by the bond of cause and effect, effect and cause.”<sup>55</sup> In most forms of modern society, these two “concepts” have corresponded directly to a division between two spheres—government and economy—but it was possible to envisage their coming together in the form of a “centralized state-capitalism”<sup>56</sup> in which the state is “the only banker, capitalist, organizer, and director of all national labor, and the distributor of its products.”<sup>57</sup> Where, then, does this leave the concept of class? Bakunin’s (and, to a lesser extent, Kropotkin’s) views have often been construed as part of the

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54 Ibid., 339.

55 P. Kropotkin, “Modern Science and Anarchism” [1912], in *Kropotkin’s Revolutionary Pamphlets*, 181.

56 Ibid., 170, 186.

57 M. Bakunin, “Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis” [1870], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 217.

“new class” tradition, which argues that intellectuals, managers and experts—not the working class—would take power in post-capitalist societies, their rule premised on a “monopoly of knowledge.”<sup>58</sup> Bakunin did indeed argue that the classical Marxist “dictatorship of the proletariat” would be a dictatorship *over* the proletariat, headed by a “new privileged political-scientific class” comprised of “state engineers.”<sup>59</sup> There would be a state, and this state would involve “an extremely complex government” that “administer[s] and govern[s] the masses politically” as well as “economically.” Such a state requires rule by experts, “a new class, a new hierarchy of real and counterfeit scientists and scholars.”<sup>60</sup>

But a closer examination of these texts reveals a more complex picture. The “new class” is a “political” as well as a “scientific” class. Although it is “a minority ruling in the name of knowledge” with heads “overflowing with brains,”<sup>61</sup> this is primarily an ideological *justification* for its rule; its power does *not* arise from expertise and science, since many of its members are “counterfeit.” Indeed, rather than running on scientific lines, the new system provides privileges and opportunities for the “shrewd” and “mercenary-minded,” including “a vast field for lucrative, underhanded dealings.”<sup>62</sup>

Bakunin was clear that the real basis of the “new class” in the “dictatorship of the proletariat” lay in its control over the “production and division of wealth,” including farming, finance, and manufacturing, as well as “considerable armed force” deployed both at home and abroad.<sup>63</sup> He also stressed the essential continuity between this system and earlier class systems: behind its rhetoric lay the “true despotic and brutal nature of all states, regardless of their form of government.” The new system is “completely identical” to modern states like Prussia; its reliance on “armed force” in its “home affairs” is the “the last argument of all threatened political leaders against the masses,” whose interests necessarily clashed with those of the elite.

The “dictatorship of the proletariat” was not even a new system, strictly speaking, but a *variety* of capitalism which Kropotkin termed “centralized state-capitalism.”<sup>64</sup> Under such a system, Bakunin says, the state is “the only

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58 I. Szelenyi and B. Martin, “The Three Waves of New Class Theories,” *Theory and Society* 17, no. 5 (1988): 646–647.

59 Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 331–333.

60 M. Bakunin, “The International and Karl Marx” [1872], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 318–319.

61 Ibid.

62 Bakunin, “Letter to *La Liberté*,” 284.

63 Bakunin, “The International and Karl Marx,” 319–321.

64 Kropotkin, “Modern Science and Anarchism,” 170, 186.

banker, capitalist, organizer, and director of all national labor, and the distributor of its products,"<sup>65</sup> and "regimented workingmen and women will sleep, wake, work, and live to the beat of a drum."<sup>66</sup> This kind of state could never wither away, since, rather than progressively abolishing classes, it would instead comprise a central pillar of *minority* class rule, a dictatorship *over* the proletariat and peasantry.

Bakunin's discussion of postcolonial states, although less well-known than his predictions about the class character of the systems classical Marxists sought to establish, is also instructive. Speaking of Serbia—which, at the time, had recently gained independence from Turkey—Bakunin insisted that new ruling groups can emerge through the state itself *even without taking direct control of the means of production*. In the wake of independence there were "no nobles, no big landowners, no industrialists, and no very wealthy merchants."<sup>67</sup> The educated young patriots who occupied the new state quickly became a "new bureaucratic aristocracy" driven by the "iron logic" of their position into becoming "cynical bureaucratic martinets" and enemies of the people. It is clear from this analysis that it is control of those core resources centralized in the state—the means of coercion and administration—that provided the basis for the "bureaucratic aristocracy" to emerge, and, further, that their position at the head of the state forced them (with "iron logic") into class conflict with the popular classes they dominated and exploited.

What general principles can be extracted from this discussion regarding the anarchist analysis of class and state? First, it is important to note that anarchists do not actually mean precisely the same thing as the Marxists when they invoke the concept of "class." For Bakunin, the class system was not defined simply in economic terms—that is, in terms of *relations of production*—but also had to be understood in terms of *relations of domination*; not just in terms of inequitable ownership of the *means of production*, but also in terms of ownership of the *means of coercion* (the capacity to physically enforce decisions) and of *administration* (the instruments that govern society).<sup>68</sup> It is only possible to understand the anarchist claim that a state must (with "iron logic") generate a new ruling class, and that state managers are themselves part of

65 Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis," 217.

66 Bakunin, "Letter to *La Liberté*," 284.

67 Bakunin, "Statism and Anarchy," 343.

68 I am expressing the basic anarchist theses on class here in as precise and abbreviated a conceptual language as possible. Different writers have used different terminology at different times to express the same ideas, some emphasizing the relations of domination, others the relations of production, but few embracing a simple economic model of class.

a ruling class and not mere servants of a ruling class *external* to the state, by recognizing that class is envisaged here in relation to ownership or control of one or more of the aforementioned core resources. A ruling class is not just an economically dominant class; indeed, members have no direct relation at all to the means of production.

Under classical capitalism, these two axes of class power can be fairly closely mapped onto two distinct organizations that centralize resources into the hands of economic and political elites—viz., the corporation (which wields the means of production) and the state (which wields the means of administration and coercion). In such a situation, the ruling class comprises both the private capitalists and landlords as well as the state managers, including the state bureaucracy and the judicial, police, and military forces, respectively. Although the two main sectors require each other insofar as they have convergent interests, they also have substantial autonomy from each other on the basis of independent power resources. (This is a simplified model, of course, since even in classical capitalism the picture is complicated by the existence of, for example, state capitalist corporations alongside private ones.)

Bakunin made it clear that although the capitalists, whether state or private, are part of the ruling class, they are not necessarily always the *dominant* part. Bakunin instead sketched out at least three modern variant forms of the classical capitalism schema outlined above: state-capitalism, where the capitalists and the state managers are fused into a single state apparatus; underdeveloped postcolonial capitalism, where the state itself is a source of accumulation but accumulates through taxation, corruption, and nepotism rather than capitalist exploitation; and semi-industrial capitalism, where, alongside the capitalists and state managers, a third ruling class sector exist comprised of landlords who exploit peasants through rents and levies.

The deeper point that should not be lost is that class is partly about relations of production and partly about relations of domination and neither is simply the consequence of the other. These relations are intertwined, although distinct. Private ownership of the means of production can only be used for exploitation if buttressed by relations of domination, whereas monopoly of the means of coercion and administration requires the financing provided by economic exploitation. The state apparatus provides the state managers with an independent resource base that enables their empowerment and enrichment. Economic power allows individuals access to state power, but state power allows individuals access to economic power as well. And, while the political and economic elites wield different resources, their interests are convergent and mutually reinforcing but not identical. For example, wars may arise from geopolitical rather than economic considerations and lead both to interruptions in

production as well as the appropriation through taxation of a greater proportion of the proceeds of exploitation, each of which is to the immediate detriment of the economic elite. Given the rejection of economic determinism and the proposition that the state has its own irreducible dynamics, neither the primacy of relations of production over relations of domination nor—where these groups are distinct—of economic elites over political elites can be established.

### Stages, Teleology, and Transitions

The anarchists were not just skeptical of the analytical apparatus of historical materialism but also of the model of historical progress—specifically, the vision of a natural arc to history—with which it is closely associated. For Kropotkin, this model is infused with Hegelian “metaphysical fictions” that imbue history with a unified logic, progressive character, and definite end goal.<sup>69</sup> These “metaphysical formulae” had no rational or scientific basis, lacked basic proofs, and ignored “social life ... [which is] incomparably more complicated, and incomparably more interesting for practical purposes.”<sup>70</sup> It was certainly possible, Kropotkin argued, to develop a single overarching theory of society, but for him this involved the “natural-scientific method, the method of induction and deduction” rather than “metaphysics.”<sup>71</sup>

Bakunin argued that the Marxist model of a progressive history working towards set goals required serious misreading of actual history. The vision of economic progress spelled out in this model was demonstrably inaccurate. Not only are there intellectual, cultural, political, and other factors that have independent effects on the course of events, that many of these effects are economically retrogressive. As an example, Bakunin cited the negative impact of wars and fanaticism on learning in the ancient world, including the destruction of the Library of Alexandria in Egypt.<sup>72</sup> The Marxist model rests, accordingly, on a conflation of what *did* happen with what *had* to happen, and—since history was viewed as essentially progressive—a tendency to conflate what *had* to happen with what *should* happen. However, much of what *did* happen was contingent rather than inevitable, arising from complicated multi-causal social processes. Moreover, it was often not progressive when

69 Kropotkin, “Modern Science and Anarchism,” 150–152.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 150–154.

72 Bakunin, “The International and Karl Marx,” 310–311.

considered in terms of the expansion of forces of production, reason, morality, freedom, peace, or any other reasonable measure. History does not always move forward; it often moves backwards or sideways as well. And since there is no single path, there are no by-ways or cul-de-sacs.

With regard to ethics and political strategy, Bakunin also argued that treating essentially contingent events as desirable because they supposedly confirmed a (non-existent) grand arc of history was problematic. The “necessity of dying when one is bitten by a mad dog” is real, but the desirability of the death is questionable and its contribution to progress dubious. Although many events in history appear in retrospect to be unavoidable, they must still be condemned “with all the energy of which we are capable in the interest of our social and individual morality.”<sup>73</sup>

According to Bakunin, Marx’s view of history led him to politically questionable judgments on current affairs. Since Marx believed that the “modern, military, bureaucratic state”—no less than capitalism—aided the “slow, but always progressive” movement of history, he was compelled to view the “triumph of the centralized, despotic state” over feudal peasant uprisings as a possibly tragic but certainly “essential condition for the coming Social Revolution.”<sup>74</sup>

The same logic lent itself to a conditional support for imperialism. Although Bakunin does not seem to have alluded to Marx’s controversial writings on British rule in India or the United States’ annexation of California, he certainly recalled his debates with Marx and Engels in the 1840s, at which time he was a radical pan-Slavist fighting for decolonization in Eastern Europe. Marx and Engels had specifically opposed a range of independence movements as futile and regressive struggles by “non-historic” peoples who required, instead, the civilizing influences of Germanic rule.<sup>75</sup> It is true that Bakunin did not resist the obvious temptation to label Marx a German nationalist and a bigot. However, this cheap shot should not obscure Bakunin’s core argument. Unlike many nationalist and “postcolonial” theorists who read Marx’s and Engels’ positions on colonialism as examples of a universally shared, “Orientalist” and racist European outlook, Bakunin understood that their positions were very much the products of their own very specific theoretical model.

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73 Ibid., 311.

74 Ibid., 309–310.

75 M. Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement: The Idea of the Nation in Socialist and Anarchist Theory* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 58.

Marx and Engels supported (or opposed) specific developments on the basis of whether they advanced the prospects for a universal socialist revolution. Since the very bridge to socialism lay in the progress of capitalism and the associated rise of the working class movement, whatever advanced capitalist development for *all* of humanity was to be welcomed. It was this logic, rather than some monolithic “white” worldview, that led Marx and Engels to oppose independence for some European nationalities (e.g., the Czechs in 1848) yet support it for others (e.g., the Irish in 1870); to defend (Asian) Turkish rule over (European) Slavs (in 1855 and 1879); to support the Germans “thrashing” the French in 1870;<sup>76</sup> and to dismiss the German peasant risings of 1525 as “achieving nothing.”<sup>77</sup> Clearly neither race nor culture was the determining factor in these Marxist judgments. What mattered rather, was how these developments fit into the march of history. Bakunin, the anarchist, opposed the reasoning involved, the political conclusions drawn, and the moral positions taken; there were few horrors, he suggested, that could not be justified in the name of historical progress.

Classical Marxists never denied that peasants could play a revolutionary role or contribute to a “magnificent revolutionary effort.”<sup>78</sup> They argued, rather, that exploited classes like slaves, serfs, and peasants were intrinsically unable to undertake the progressive reconstruction of the social order. They were fragmented by the conditions of production, being dispersed across vast territories in largely agrarian economies, isolated into small and autonomous production units like farms, and unified primarily by the coercion of the ruling classes. Very difficult to organize, their political horizons were narrow; they sought withdrawal into autarchic family farms and workshops, free of external impositions like taxes, tithes, and rents, rather than a cooperative and universal social order based on systematic technological advance. Indeed, not only were the rebellions of such classes unlikely to succeed, but their successes could easily damage the forces of production.

Peasants form a class, said Marx, only in the sense of having common “economic conditions of existence.” Because they have “merely a local interconnection,” they are “consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name.”<sup>79</sup> Only under the leadership of *other* revolutionary classes—first,

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76 F. Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life* [1936] (London: Allen & Unwin, 1951), 438–441.

77 F. Engels, “The Peasant War in Germany” [1850], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 10, 480–482.

78 *Ibid.*, 478.

79 K. Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” [1852], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 11, 187.

the bourgeoisie, in the struggle against feudalism, and later, the proletariat, in the struggle against capitalism—can forces such as the peasantry play a revolutionary role. Lacking leadership from outside, it was inevitable that the peasant rebels of 1525 would achieve “nothing.”

The progressive role of capitalism, accordingly, has three main elements: first, capitalism uproots feudalism by means of bourgeois—democratic revolutions; second, it creates the only social force that is capable of abolishing the modern proletariat; and third, through its relentless development of the forces of production it creates the material basis for a society without want. The modern proletariat—centralized into large production units that required cooperation to operate, gathered in cities, deskilled, exploited, and oppressed—had both the capacity and the imperative to unite on a large scale and envisage and institute a radically different socialist future.

Meanwhile, Marx and Engels argued, the competitive drive of the capitalist mode of production developed the forces of production to the level required for an egalitarian post-scarcity society while simultaneously laying the foundations for the rational economic planning required. The revolutionary tasks of the proletarian state—the centralization of the means of production in state hands, the institution of a planned economy, and the defeat of counter-revolutionary forces—were facilitated by the evolution of capitalism into large oligopolies which themselves practice central planning and, in so doing, render capitalism and capitalists superfluous. This is the “abolition of capital as private property within the framework of the capitalist mode of production itself.”<sup>80</sup> Such a situation would, they insisted, enable an exploited class, for the first time, to take power and install a new, more advanced mode of production. As the capitalist class shrinks and the intermediate classes fall away; as the proletariat expands, its internal divisions decline and it advances from unions to the formation of a Communist Party, and from there to the seizure of state power. Since this outcome was essential and desirable, as claimed above, the development of the capitalist mode of production was historically necessary and progressive: whatever the crimes committed in its pursuit, it was “the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.”<sup>81</sup> This was not a prognosis with which the anarchists were comfortable.

Firstly, there was an important difference with the analysis of what Marxists called bourgeois-democratic revolutions. Kropotkin agreed with the argument that the rising bourgeoisie sought and secured major changes, such as

80 K. Marx, “Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. III” [1894], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 37, 434.

81 K. Marx, “The British Rule in India” [1853], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 10, 132.



free markets and capitalist-run parliaments, through events like the French Revolution.<sup>82</sup> But he insisted that the peasantry and the workers were independent agents in these struggles and radicalized by them.<sup>83</sup> In the French case, their appropriation of Enlightenment ideas as well as the promises of the revolution impelled them to seek far more radical changes, including republicanism. Through direct action they implemented measures such as the massive redistribution of feudal estates, local universal suffrage, and tax reforms. These went far beyond the original bourgeois plan, which, sought to forge a compromise with feudalism, as in the case of the English Revolution. In other words, there was nothing intrinsically “democratic” about bourgeois revolutions, since the democratic elements came to a large extent from outside the bourgeoisie and worked against it, and the bourgeoisie responded with manipulation and repression wherever possible, including through alliances with feudal forces and subversion.<sup>84</sup>

The anarchists also leveled a range of specific criticisms against Marx’s analysis of the dynamics of capitalism itself which also question the notion that capitalism builds a bridge to socialism. However, it is essential to stress here that there is no absolute break between anarchist and Marxist economic analyses, in the sense that the anarchist tradition critically appropriated Marx’s economic theory in order to develop its own insights into economics. Thus it is said that anarchism includes both “Proudhonian politics and Marxian economics.”<sup>85</sup> The relationship between classical Marxism and the broad anarchist tradition in this regard was by no means as polarized as is sometimes assumed. The theory of exploitation through the wage system described by the anarchists was essentially identical to that of the Marxists.<sup>86</sup> For example, Bakunin’s stated quibble with Marx’s *Capital* was that it was written in a style quite incomprehensible to the average worker.<sup>87</sup> He began a Russian translation of the book in the 1870s, having completed the first Russian translation of the *Communist Manifesto* in the 1860s.<sup>88</sup> Kropotkin despised Marx, but his

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82 P. Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1973* [1909], 2 vols. (London: Elephant Editions, 1986), vol. 1, 26–29.

83 Ibid., 22–23, 34–5, 114–128, 148, 162–165, 193, 200–214, 261–263, 277–280, 287–289; Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution*, vol. 2, 373–380, 390–398, 451, 504–528.

84 Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution*, vol. 1, 209–214, 224–232, 239–245, 260–264, 278–280; Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution*, vol. 2, 304–316, 360–372, 570–574, 593–595.

85 Kenafick, “The Life of Bakunin,” 15.

86 P. Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* [1892] (London, Elephant Editions, 1990), 56, 58, 139.

87 M. Bakunin, *The Capitalist System* [1871] (Champaign, Ill.: Libertarian Labor Review, 1993), note 2.

88 K. Marx and F. Engels, “Preface to the Second Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*” [1882], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 24, 425.

understanding of class struggle, exploitation, and capitalist crisis was deeply influenced by Marxist economics.<sup>89</sup> Malatesta, who complained that anarchism was too “impregnated with Marxism,”<sup>90</sup> did not develop an alternative economic analysis but instead implicitly used Marxist categories and models. His comrade Carlo Cafiero published a summary of Marx’s *Capital*.

For Marx, capitalism’s dynamism in developing the forces of production was a function of competition.<sup>91</sup> Given the premise that the market price of a commodity fundamentally corresponds to the socially necessary amount of labor time required for its production, price competition required reductions in labor time expended. This led to a continual restructuring of labor processes as well the growing importance of machinery in production. Given that unpaid labor time, or exploitation via the wage system, was the source of the surplus value that underlies profits and was therefore the core fund for these investments, the continual decline in labor time expended tended to decrease the rate of profit. Partly to compensate for this, capitalists invested in new sectors where the rate of profit was initially higher but would eventually succumb to the very same processes.

A further problem is the disparity between production and consumption. Uncoordinated production by competing capital leads to more being produced than can be sold, which prevents the realization of the surplus value embodied in the commodities. This was the problem of “overproduction.” Over time, Marx argued, capitalism would undergo an ever-growing concentration and centralization; this would lead to a situation of oligopoly, or even monopoly, in which central planning, including price-fixing, would both anticipate the features of the new socialist system as well as signal the exhaustion of the capitalist mode of production as the competitive drive faded. At this stage, capitalism became an active brake on the further development of the forces of production.

Kropotkin’s critique of this model involved a seemingly innocuous point about prices. Marx’s price theory depended on a version of the labor theory of value according to which prices were rooted in objective processes in the sphere of production. Labor power—the capacity to work—was a commodity sold for wages by the worker to the employer for a period of time. Although its market value could fluctuate a bit, its cost was fundamentally set by the

89 See, for example, Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 168.

90 Guérin, “Marxism and Anarchism,” 117–118.

91 There are numerous general guides to Marxist theory, but core original texts include K. Marx, *Value, Price and Profit: Addressed to Working Men* [1865] and K. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 [1867].

labor time required to produce the workers who embodied it. Neo-classical economic liberals, partly in response, articulated the theory of marginal utility, which stated that prices are entirely rooted in individual preferences under given market conditions—that is, in subjective processes in the sphere of circulation. Wage levels, as such, are set by individual actions in markets, and even the costs required to produce labour power reflect essentially subjective actions in prior markets for food, heat and the like.

Kropotkin did not deny the importance of labor time in shaping prices, nor did he discount the effect that market conditions could have on wage rates. But he stressed that wage rates were determined by a wide variety of other factors as well. For prices generally, “Many other factors come about in a capitalist society, so as to alter the simple relation that may have existed once between labour and exchange value.”<sup>92</sup> These included government policies, the relative profitability of particular industries, and, last but not least, *power relations*, including the balance of forces between classes, the power of particular states in world markets, and popular action, including the ability of skilled and professional employees to establish skill monopolies<sup>93</sup> and the pressure of unions and strikes, most effectively generated by a “great union of all possible trades.”<sup>94</sup>

Prices, then, were fundamentally affected by powerful organizations including states, monopolies, and cartels alongside those craft and industrial unions associated with the sectors of capital and labor. In other words, prices had less to do with exchange values based on socially necessary levels of labor time, or with use values arising from individual preferences, than with the “relative economic, military and social power held by the respective parties,” which “skew[s] the relative ‘value’ of commodities, or at least of the price that can be gotten for them.”<sup>95</sup>

Here it is important to note that Bakunin and Kropotkin consistently described capitalism as a system centred on large monopolies, oligopolies and cartels.<sup>96</sup> Far from being outcomes of a dynamic capitalism in which large firms consume smaller rivals, the highly centralized structure of capital arose from state actions like enclosures, privatization licenses, and subsidies made “in favor of capitalists at home, and still more in conquered lands, such as

92 Kropotkin, “Modern Science and Anarchism,” 91.

93 Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 36–37, 165–166, 184.

94 P. Kropotkin, “1st May 1891,” in *Direct Struggle Against Capital: A Peter Kropotkin Anthology*, ed. I. McKay (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2011), 328–329, 331.

95 J. Bekken, “Peter Kropotkin’s Anarchist Economics for a New Society,” in *Radical Economics and Labor: Essays in Honor of the IWW Centennial*, eds. F. Lee and J. Bekken (New York: Routledge, 2009), 29.

96 Bakunin, “On the Cooperative Movement,” in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 399.

Egypt, Tonkin, the Transvaal, and so on."<sup>97</sup> As Kropotkin explicitly states, this means there was *never* a period of free markets in capitalism, since such state interventions have always been the norm.

Although the anarchists agreed with the Marxists that capitalism was wracked with periodic crises of overproduction leading to unemployment and depressed wages,<sup>98</sup> they nonetheless argued that there were two important counter-tendencies. First, large monopolies, oligopolies, and cartels not only shaped prices but were also able to "constantly reduce the output by restraining production," both deliberately and indirectly.<sup>99</sup> Second, as Kropotkin contended, capitalism entailed systematic *underproduction* insofar as it continually created obstacles to creativity and productivity through alienating work, low wages, unequal and ineffective education, damaged health, and low morale. This exemplified the basically wasteful nature of the system: people, equipment, and raw materials lay idle despite pressing social needs,<sup>100</sup> while the forces of production that were used were more often than not used inefficiently. Taken together, these points suggest that capitalism is based on an unjust and inefficient distribution as well as distorted production geared primarily to producing for profit, war, and the luxury and power of ruling minorities.<sup>101</sup>

This has enormous implications for the analysis of capitalism. If, on the one hand, the law of value under capitalism is *systematically* deformed by power relations, and, on the other, capitalism is characterized by monopolies and oligopolies *throughout* its existence and not just towards the end of its epoch, then neither price competition nor the relentless expansion of forces of production are central features of capitalism, which instead relies on restricted and distorted development. This strongly undermines the classical Marxist notion of capitalism as a progressive mode of production that lays the foundation for a transition to socialism. The anarchists also gainsaid the Marxist claim that the rise of large companies would involve the inevitable eclipse of small firms. Small and medium-sized firms continue to exist in capitalism and are even expanding in numbers, often as contractors to the big firms.<sup>102</sup> Not receiving the same privileges from the state as the giant companies that dominate

97 Kropotkin, "Modern Science and Anarchism," 97–98.

98 P. Kropotkin, "Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles" [1887], in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, 55–56.

99 Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 36, 102.

100 Ibid., 36–37; Kropotkin, "Modern Science and Anarchism," 167–168.

101 Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 37–38.

102 Kropotkin, "1st May 1891," 329–330; E. Malatesta, *Fra Contadini: A Dialogue on Anarchy* [1883], trans. J. Weir (London: Bratach Dubh Editions, 1981), 40n2; Tcherkesoff, *Pages of Socialist History*, 23–38.

markets,<sup>103</sup> the small firms are based on ruthless “sweating” and act as a “counterweight” on wage gains in the “larger industries.”<sup>104</sup> In short, these firms are not an alternative to the big firms but their complements. The history of capitalism, accordingly, was not about an evolution from competitive to monopoly capitalism, since the system has always been supported by the state as well as smaller proxies and, to this extent, has always been monopolistic.

### Agency, States and Strategy

These larger analytical issues play a critical role in the formulation of both classical Marxist and anarchist strategies and tactics. Both traditions are fundamentally concerned with changing the world, and both link their larger theories, whether implicitly or explicitly, to their projects for change. This dimension in Marxism is well-known: “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.”<sup>105</sup> For anarchism it is less often recognized, partly because many discussions of its relationship to Marxism have focused on strategic differences, ignoring the larger theoretical issues in which these differences are embedded, or else are simply abysmally ignorant about anarchism.<sup>106</sup>

The relationship between the theoretical and the strategic dimensions is complex in both traditions. Despite their theoretical stress on the inevitability of socialism, for example, classical Marxists have never been content to simply await its coming. On the contrary, they have repeatedly stressed the importance of constructing revolutionary political parties armed with the correct strategy and tactics as a necessary condition for the conquest of state power. Arguing against Bakunin, for example, Marx insisted that “the proletariat can only act as a class by turning itself into a political party” that must aim at the “conquest of state power” and create a “proletarian dictatorship” based upon “centralization” and “force.”<sup>107</sup> With Engels, he stressed that this state would

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103 Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 133–134.

104 Kropotkin, “1st May 1891,” 330.

105 K. Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” [1845], *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 5, 5. Emphases in original.

106 A notable caricature can be found in H. Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol. IV: Critique of Other Socialisms* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 108–170.

107 From the resolutions sponsored by Marx and Engels at the 1872 Hague conference of the First International, in Gerth, *The First International*, 216–217, 285–286.

nationalize the economy and employ labor.<sup>108</sup> For Kautsky, similarly, “the social revolution for which the proletariat strives cannot be realized until it shall have captured political power,” and this requires a “great organized party.”<sup>109</sup>

Lenin insisted that a Marxist is one “who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat,” and this requires “centralized organization of force, of violence,” and “undivided power.”<sup>110</sup> For Stalin, similarly, “our party ... does not share and cannot share the guidance of the state with any other party,” and “[t]his is what we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>111</sup> Mao, too, asserted that he who refuses to recognize that the “leadership of the Communist Party and the state power of the people’s dictatorship” are necessary for revolutionary change “is no communist.”<sup>112</sup> There is an obvious and real continuity between these conceptions in the classical Marxist tradition. Indeed, a substantial body of work warns against attempts to set up neat breaks between, for example, Marx and Engels,<sup>113</sup> Kautsky and Lenin,<sup>114</sup> or, for that matter, Trotsky and Stalin.<sup>115</sup> This does not mean there was no change and innovation over time, but it does signal that one-party Marxist-Leninist states cannot be dismissed as a “Stalinist” deviation from “real” Marxism, as they are the only historic examples of revolutionary Marxist states in history and the reference point for the vast majority of Marxists in the twentieth century.

Long before his exile, Trotsky insisted that the Bolshevik party had “the final word in all fundamental questions,” that the regime was built

108 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 40, 55–56.

109 Kautsky, *The Road to Power*, 5–6, 64.

110 Lenin, “The State and Revolution,” 255, 261–262.

111 J. Stalin, “The Party’s Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Problem” [1927], in *Leninism: Selected Writings*, 42.

112 Mao, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship,” 372.

113 Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms*, 250–286.

114 L.T. Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered: ‘What is to be Done?’ in Context* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008); L.T. Lih, “‘The New Era of War and Revolution’: Lenin, Kautsky, Hegel and the Outbreak of World War I,” in *Cataclysm 1914*, ed. A. Anievas (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 366–412.

115 For more on these issues, see, for example, V.G. Devinatz, “Lenin as Scientific Manager under Monopoly Capitalism, State Capitalism, and Socialism: A Response to Scoville,” *Industrial Relations* 42, no. 3 (2003): 513–520; S. Farber, *Before Stalinism: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Democracy* (London: Polity, 1990); J.E. Marot, “Trotsky, the Left Opposition and the Rise of Stalinism: Theory and Practice,” *Historical Materialism* 14, no. 3 (2006): 175–206; van der Walt, “Counterpower, Participatory Democracy, Revolutionary Defence,” 193–207; E. van Ree, “Socialism in One Country: A Reassessment,” *Studies in East European Thought* 50, no. 2 (1998): 77–117.

on “the unquestioned authority of the party, and the faultlessness of its discipline,”<sup>116</sup> and that the party was “entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers’ democracy.”<sup>117</sup> Many years later he continued to defend the “revolutionary dictatorship of a proletarian party,” rather than of the whole proletariat, as an “objective necessity”<sup>118</sup> and to insist that the Soviet Union was “transitional” to socialism, marked by major “social conquests” and revolutionary social relations.<sup>119</sup>

These continuities, including statist and party-centered conceptions of change, were integral to classical Marxism. But this model of transition, Bakunin noted, gestured at an unremarked anomaly in Marxist thinking—viz., that Marx’s insistence that socialist transition entails a revolutionary state expropriating and suppressing the capitalist owners of the means of production fits uneasily within his own materialist model. Marx claimed that states were part of the superstructure, a *reflection* of the base, yet his strategy hinged on using the superstructure to *change* the base by revolutionizing the relations of production—in which case the state is not simply a reflection of the base after all.<sup>120</sup>

For Bakunin and Kropotkin, as we have noted, states are institutions through which ruling class minorities maintain their power and, for this reason, are necessarily centralized. This, coupled with the fact that states have irreducible elitist dynamics of its own, implies that they are incapable of undoing class-based social relations. As a hierarchical system of territorial rule that *necessarily* concentrates power in the hands of a few and defends class system in the interests of capitalists, landlords, *and* state managers, a revolutionary state would simply create a new elite: “All States rule, all governments being by their very nature placed outside the people, must necessarily seek to subject it to customs and purposes entirely foreign to it.”<sup>121</sup>

Rejecting the notion of a democratic “workers state” as impossible, the anarchists instead advocated for a revolution involving the abolition of corporations,

116 L. Trotsky, *In Defence of Terrorism (Terrorism and Communism): A Reply To Karl Kautsky* (London: Labour Publishing Company, 1921), 99.

117 Quoted in I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 508–509.

118 L. Trotsky, *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1936–37*, 2nd edition (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975), 513–514.

119 L. Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1937), 47, 254–255.

120 Bakunin, “Letter to *La Liberté*,” 281–282.

121 Bakunin *Marxism, Freedom and the State*, 63.

landlordism, and states, with the oppressed classes “organized from below upwards by means” of their “own autonomous and completely free associations, without the supervision of any guardians.”<sup>122</sup> In such a situation, the means of administration, coercion, and production would be placed under the common ownership and democratic coordination of the oppressed classes themselves. Given that class divisions entail monopolies of the foregoing, class would be abolished in such a system, and the dynamics of capitalist rivalry and state geopolitical conflict would disappear. It was essential, said Kropotkin, to “attack the central power, to strip it of its prerogatives, to decentralize, to dissolve authority ... [through] a truly popular revolution.”<sup>123</sup> If the whole proletariat was actually elevated to “stand at the head of the government,” Bakunin argued, there would be “no government, no state.”<sup>124</sup> Either the Marxist “dictatorship of the proletariat” meant rule by a minority, in which case it was unacceptable as a revolutionary project, or else it meant generalized popular power, in which case the Marxist promise that it would later wither away made no sense.<sup>125</sup> A system in which the masses govern directly, with direct control over the means of administration, coercion and production, is necessarily a system without a state.

Given the anarchist analysis of class and state, any revolution that seeks to use the state will inevitably serve to maintain an institution antithetical to the logic of participatory democracy and self-management. To retain the state is to retain a class-based system that excludes the majority from governance.<sup>126</sup> The classical Marxist approach, which effectively merges the state with the corporations and landlords through a program of nationalization and centralized planning, entails a “revolution by decrees” that will “only perpetuate that which they were supposed to destroy”<sup>127</sup>—i.e., the domination and exploitation of the popular classes by a minority class. The sincerity of the revolutionaries was not at issue; rather, the very use of the state machine imposed an “iron logic” that made state managers “enemies of the people.”<sup>128</sup> Activists do not change the state; the state changes them. As Bakunin once commented:

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122 Ibid.

123 P. Kropotkin, “Representative Government” [1885] in *Words of a Rebel: Peter Kropotkin*, ed. G. Woodcock (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992), 143.

124 Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 330.

125 Ibid., 331–332.

126 Ibid., 337.

127 Bakunin, “Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis,” 193–194. Emphasis in original.

128 Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 343.



"Take the most sincere democrat and put him on the throne; if he does not step down promptly, he will surely become a scoundrel."<sup>129</sup>

Marxists have traditionally offered three primary justifications for the revolutionary state—viz., expropriation of the capitalists, economic coordination, and military defense of the revolution. The anarchist model of change, by contrast, centered on the construction of "social and economic equality" which was "established in the world by the spontaneous organization of labor and the collective ownership of property by freely organized producers' associations, and by the equally spontaneous federation of communes, to replace the domineering paternalistic State"<sup>130</sup> from the bottom up.<sup>131</sup> The State, Kropotkin insisted, "having been the force to which the minorities resorted for establishing and organizing their power over the masses, cannot be the force which will serve to destroy those privileges."<sup>132</sup>

Both insurrectionist and mass anarchism advocated building a popular movement based on counter-power (i.e., popular organizations that could resist, and eventually supplant, the ruling class) and counter-culture (i.e., a counter-hegemonic worldview). This movement would prefigure the new society; it would also seek to generate a radical rupture within the current social order rather than a gradual transition, since only through this revolution from below could the ruling class be cast down, and classes, states and oppression more generally be abolished. For the mass anarchists, this project required a slow, patient project of mass organization and education, not least through struggles for immediate reforms and the accumulation of capacity over time. Syndicalism featured centrally in the armory of mass anarchism. Bakunin, for example, argued for a revolutionary unionism that could "erect upon the ruins of the old world the free federation of workers' associations," sowing "the living seeds of the new society which is to replace the old world"<sup>133</sup> and giving rise to a "serious international organization of workers' associations of all lands capable of replacing this departing world of *states*."<sup>134</sup> For Kropotkin, it was essential to build up workers' resistance, solidarity, and consciousness in the unions with the ultimate goal of creating a "vast workers' organization" to

129 M. Bakunin, "Revolutionary Catechism" [1866], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 91.

130 Bakunin, "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State," 262.

131 Ibid., 263.

132 Kropotkin, "Modern Science and Anarchism," 170.

133 M. Bakunin, "The Program of the Alliance" [1871], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 255.

134 M. Bakunin, "The Policy of the International" [1869], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 174. Emphasis in original.

pursue the “goal of the revolution ... expropriation of the holders of society’s wealth”—doing so if necessary “over the corpse of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>135</sup>

For anarchists, neither states nor statist political parties will change society. The movement for change has to contain within itself core values that anticipate the form and content of the society that it seeks to create—for example, class consciousness, solidarity, opposition to oppression, internal democracy, self-management, and self-activity. For Bakunin, the logic of the state was top-down, authoritarian, and stifling; the state itself was “a vast slaughterhouse or enormous cemetery, where all the real aspirations, all the living forces of a country enter generously and happily” but are ultimately “slain and buried.”<sup>136</sup> The fact that means shape ends explains why a statist project centred on political parties cannot really rid society of its current class-ridden and hierarchical character.

For Kropotkin it was essential to identify the ultimate aims and then to “specify a proposed course of action *in conformity with the end*.” Political parties aiming at state power reflected neither the means nor the ends “[anarchists] are working for.”<sup>137</sup> The revolution had to be “a widespread popular movement” in which the masses in “every town and village ... take upon themselves the task of rebuilding society” through associations founded on democratic and anti-hierarchical principles.<sup>138</sup> Looking to political leaders or the state itself for freedom is simply preparing the ground for the rise of a ruling class. “Free workers require a free organization,” one that is based on “free agreement and free cooperation, without sacrificing the autonomy of the individual to the all-pervading influence of a state.”<sup>139</sup>

While opposing all such statist projects, reformist and revolutionary alike, the anarchists were deeply troubled by the Marxist tendency to substitute the revolutionary party for the proletariat. Bakunin predicted that, in the event of capturing state power, “Mr. Marx and his friends” would “liberate” the masses in “their own way” by establishing “despotic control” over the populace and treating it as a “regimented herd.”<sup>140</sup> This was, in part, simply a restatement of

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135 P. Kropotkin, “Workers’ Organization” [1881], in *Direct Struggle Against Capital*, 304–306, 311.

136 Bakunin, “The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State,” 269.

137 Kropotkin, “Workers’ Organization,” 303–304.

138 Kropotkin, “Modern Science and Anarchism,” 188.

139 Kropotkin, “Anarchist Communism,” 52.

140 Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 331–332.

the arguments already made against the use of the state, including the notion that a new elite might claim to be “ruling in the name of knowledge.”<sup>141</sup>

It is clear from the context that Bakunin was referring to the notion that Marxism was a uniquely “scientific” socialism which alone represented the working class and whose very victory was foreordained by history. The Communists, said Marx and Engels, “always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole,” are “the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country,” and “have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the lines of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.”<sup>142</sup> Taking by itself, such a perspective is not terribly different from that of the anarchists, who certainly viewed themselves as being champions of the oppressed classes armed with a superior analysis and outlook. More generally, every person who takes up and defends a particular political position—even if that position is completely relativistic in character—takes for granted that his or own view is superior to rivals’ view and so should inform action. For anarchists, however, Marxists made two additional claims that implied the complete substitution of party for class: first, that Marxism *alone* represented “always and everywhere” the interests and program of the working class, and that anarchism and other rival ideologies, by extension, variously represented feudal forces, the ruined peasantry,<sup>143</sup> capitalist “henchmen,” and assorted “*bourgeois* trends” “irreconcilably opposed” to socialism<sup>144</sup>; and second, that the Marxist party itself was the only legitimate instrument for the seizure of state power and, more precisely, the formation of a centralized state based on force and “undivided power.”<sup>145</sup>

Since state power can only be held by minorities, this also means, effectively, that the state is captured by the *leadership* of the party (in Bakunin’s day, “Mr. Marx and his friends”; in later days, Lenin and others). Armed with the theory that the party alone represented the working class, committed to centralized “dictatorship”, and operating without real restraint, it was not a long step for Marxists to the view that all critics were not just ill-informed, but represented hostile class enemies and agents of counter-revolution that required suppression. This means that the party leadership would objectively qualify as “enemies of the people” they exploited and dominated and would quickly move

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141 Bakunin, “The International and Karl Marx,” 318–319.

142 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 39–41.

143 Ibid., 58–78.

144 V.I. Lenin, “The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government” [1918], in *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, 599. Emphasis in original.

145 Lenin, “The State and Revolution,” 255.

to suppress all peasant and working class dissent as counter-revolutionary. In this way, “despotic control” by a new elite might *claim* to be “rul[e] in the name of knowledge”—in other words, that *Marxist* knowledge as decided and authorized by the party ideologues would be used to justify substitutionism and authoritarianism.

Those who have sought to cleanse Marx of the taint of the Russian *gulag* have placed much emphasis on the fact that he only rarely used the phrase “dictatorship of the proletariat,” and then only in ambiguous ways.<sup>146</sup> But Bakunin’s and Kropotkin’s charge that classical Marxist strategies were bound to end in dictatorship by a new class makes almost no reference to this phrase. Nor did the anarchists claim that Marx specifically and overtly advocated a one-party state and dictatorship. Rather, they argued that Marxist reasoning lent itself to a conflation of (working) class and (Marxist) party, and that this would be reinforced by a second element in Marxist strategy—viz., the merger of the party and the state, with that state centralizing in itself all administration, coercion, and production.

Taken together, this would lead to a substitution of the class by the party as well as the use of the party against the class. Under a party-state committed to suppressing counter-revolution, it is difficult to see how any disagreement with the ruling party—the self-declared historic representative of the proletariat, armed with infallible “scientific” doctrine—would be possible. Regardless of whether Marx or Engels explicitly or implicitly conceived the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as rule by a small revolutionary elite, for anarchists this is precisely the sort of regime Marxism generates. As G.P. Maximoff writes: “it follows logically that terror has to be applied against all, save a very small handful of the ‘vanguard of the proletariat’ organized into a party,” which in reality entails “the dictatorship of the [party] leaders.”<sup>147</sup>

By contrast, the anarchists argued that in their revolutionary socialist democracy there would be genuine democratic rights, including the right, within the norms of the democracy, to openly disagree with, and even campaign against, the democracy. Not only would these rights be made substantive by an egalitarian social order, but there would be “absolute and complete” freedom to “voice all opinions” without reprisals, as well as freedom of association, including of associations promoting “the undermining (or destruction) of individual and public freedom.”<sup>148</sup> The system would be politically pluralistic

146 See, for example, H. Draper, *The ‘Dictatorship of the Proletariat’ from Marx to Lenin* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), chapter 1.

147 G.P. Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work: Twenty Years of Terror in Russia: The Leninist Counter Revolution* [1940] (Orkney: Cienfuegos Press, 1979), 19–20, 257.

148 Bakunin, “Revolutionary Catechism,” 79.

and there would be no conflation of party rule and popular rule. Anarchists, predominant *ideologically* only to the extent that their views were widely and freely accepted, would oppose “all ambition to dominate the revolutionary movement of the people” by “cliques or individuals.”<sup>149</sup> Informed “public opinion,” a reformed education system promoting critical thought and respect for human rights, and clear democratic structures would be the real safeguards.<sup>150</sup>

The anarchists did not deny the need for economic coordination; indeed there is an extensive anarchist literature and praxis elaborating how self-managed local units of consumption and production would be linked together by processes of participatory and democratic planning, with Bakunin explicitly arguing for a global plan arising from a vast economic federation of self-managing enterprises and communities.<sup>151</sup> For Bakunin, the “future social organization” would be “carried out from the bottom up, by free association, with unions and localities federated by communes, regions, nations, and, finally, a great universal and international federation.”<sup>152</sup>

As for the last argument for using the state, military defense, it is important to stress that the broad anarchist tradition confronted the issue head-on. While a minority, mainly syndicalists, hoped for a “bloodless revolution,” they did not ignore the state; instead, they argued that the generalized occupation and self-management of workplaces would cut material and financial supplies to the state military and enable a subversion of the soldiery.<sup>153</sup> But most argued for armed revolutionary coordinated self-defense. Bakunin, while advocating the “dissolution of the army, the judicial system ... and “the police” of the current order, argued for “permanent barricades” coordinated by delegates with “always responsible, and always revocable mandates” and the “extension of the revolutionary force” within and between “rebel countries.”<sup>154</sup> This would be part of the “standing federation” integrating the new society through a delegate system and would be part of the effort to “organize a revolutionary force with the capacity of defeating the reaction” and ensuring “the universality of

149 M. Bakunin, “On the Internal Conduct of the Alliance” in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 387.

150 Bakunin, “Revolutionary Catechism,” 79, 82.

151 Guérin, *Anarchism*, 55, 153. Notable historical examples include, for example, the anarchist management of the Barcelona water infrastructure in the latter 1930s. See, for example, S. Gorostiza, H. March, and D. Sauri, “Servicing Customers in Revolutionary Times: The Experience of the Collectivized Barcelona Water Company During the Spanish Civil War,” *Antipode* 45, no. 4 (2012): 908–925.

152 Bakunin, “The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State,” 270.

153 See, for example, R. Chaplin, *The General Strike* (Chicago, 1935).

154 M. Bakunin, “The Program of the International Brotherhood” [1869], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 152–154.

the Revolution," which had to be international in scope.<sup>155</sup> For Kropotkin, the "supreme honor" was not "dying ... in one's bed, but in the armed struggle for the emancipation of a people," a fight carried out by "the masses."<sup>156</sup> Malatesta viewed the notion of peaceful revolution as "pure utopia," since revolution is resolved through "main force" with "victory ... to the strongest."<sup>157</sup>

### Stages, Capitalism, the Peasantry and National Liberation

The final issue that divided the two traditions concerned historical stages. As I have indicated above, classical Marxists, in practice, never passively awaited the coming of a revolution, delivered by anonymous historical forces. The stages issue, however, also generated major differences (and some odd similarities) in the two traditions' the approaches to national liberation and anti-imperialist struggles. The stage-centred and teleological model of history that was key to the Marxist theory played a central role in the elaboration of Marxist strategy; it did not displace, but shaped, the action of the Marxist party as a historical force.

For Marx and Engels, the global spread of capitalism was essential to the creation of a universal proletariat, and, in the meantime, the main revolutionary prospects lay in the most advanced capitalist centers in northern and western Europe. Although Kautsky argued in 1909 that the "battle field of the proletarian revolution" was becoming "the whole world,"<sup>158</sup> this did not mean that proletarian revolution was on the actual agenda everywhere. In reality, proletarian-socialist revolution was only an option for the most advanced countries. For less advanced countries, such as though in the backward east and south of Europe as well as in most of the colonial world elsewhere, the immediate task was capitalist modernization through colonial intrusion by advanced powers<sup>159</sup> or else local bourgeois-democratic revolutions. In the early 1900s, for example, Kautsky and Lenin agreed that the struggle in Russia was for a bourgeois-democratic revolution against feudal barriers to trade and industry as well as for agrarian and legal reforms. This was "*in the highest degree*

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155 M. Bakunin, "Program and Object of the Secret Revolutionary Organization of the International Brethren" [1868], in *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism, Book One*, ed. D. Guérin (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 1989), 155–156.

156 Kropotkin, "1st May 1891," 324.

157 E. Malatesta, "Syndicalism: An Anarchist Critique [Sic]" [1907] in *The Anarchist Reader*, ed. G. Woodcock (Glasgow: Fontana/ Collins, 1977), 224.

158 Kautsky, *The Road to Power*, 126–127.

159 Marx, "The British Rule in India," 132.

*advantageous to the proletariat.*"<sup>160</sup> The peasantry could aid this process, although it would be destroyed by the subsequent development of capitalism.<sup>161</sup>

This sort of reasoning was central to the Second International's focus on Western countries and the negligible role it assigned to the colonial and postcolonial world.<sup>162</sup> Those who wanted socialist revolution in such regions were advised to foster capitalist transition, while securing modest reforms, which left little scope for independent local Marxist activity. Underneath the cloak of stageist orthodoxy, however, there were important developments that laid the foundation for more flexible political practices. The first centered on the theory of changing character of capitalist imperialism; the second centered on the notion that the historic "tasks" of one class might have to be taken up by another; and the third centered on the idea that international conditions might allow some countries to skip stages.

When Marx argued that imperialism could play a progressive role, he stressed that it was bound to generate resistance and insurrection.<sup>163</sup> Over time, he became more skeptical about the first claim, and more excited by the second. Soon afterwards, Kautsky advised Iranian Marxists to fight for independence in a cross-class alliance including the local capitalists, and also expressed growing doubts about the ability of foreign capitalism to modernize the colonies.<sup>164</sup> Lenin went further, arguing that Western capitalism had entered its final phase by the 1880s: monopoly, stagnation, and decline.<sup>165</sup> This made socialism immediately possible in the advanced countries, but it also implied that their imperialist exploits were no longer a catalyst for the development of the forces of production in the colonial world but a *barrier*. It was easy to draw the conclusion that national independence was now essential to the completion of the capitalist stage, meaning that bourgeois-democratic

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160 V.I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" [1905], in *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, 451–452. Emphasis in original.

161 G.P. Steenson, *Karl Kautsky, 1854–1938: Marxism in the Classical Years*, 2nd edition (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 135–136.

162 See L. van der Walt and S.J. Hirsch, "Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: The Colonial and Post-colonial Experience, 1870–1940," in *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution*, ed. S.J. Hirsch and L. van der Walt (Leiden: Brill, 2010), xxxv.

163 K. Marx, "Investigation of Tortures in India" [1857], in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, vol. 15, 341.

164 Lih, "The New Era of War and Revolution," 372–374.

165 V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* [1917] (Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1970).

revolution in the colonial countries was also a national and anti-imperialist revolution.

The early congresses of the Communist International (Comintern, the "Third International, formed 1919) ruled that Marxists must support "revolutionary liberation movements" that were willing to break with imperialism, adding that where capitalism was not "fully developed," the struggle was primarily a struggle against feudalism and imperialism.<sup>166</sup> It was essential to have "the most radical solution of the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, which aims at the conquest of political independence."<sup>167</sup> This perspective was affirmed at subsequent congresses, which characterized imperialism as a "parasite."<sup>168</sup> Thus, for Mao in the 1930s, the "chief targets at this stage of the Chinese revolution" were "imperialism and feudalism, the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries and the landlord class of our own country," as well as "the bourgeois reactionaries who collaborate with the imperialist and feudal forces."<sup>169</sup> Taking power in 1949, the Chinese communists described their regime as a "new democracy" based on the four classes, a *stage* towards socialism.

So, while a basic dualism remained between those countries set for proletarian-socialist revolution and those for bourgeois-democratic changes, there was nonetheless a very important shift. The new, negative assessment of capitalist imperialism meant that Marxist support for capitalist modernization in these countries now entailed a firmly anti-imperialist program that included active participation in multi-class national liberation struggles. In colonial and "semi-colonial" countries, the key task was still bourgeois-democratic change, but this now took the form of what came to be called "national-democratic" revolution. Bourgeois-democratic revolution assumed a national-democratic form, and, involved multi-class movements that incorporated the bourgeoisie but excluded feudal forces. This allowed the Third International to have a major impact in the colonial and postcolonial world, replacing the weak Second International outlook for these territories with a militant agenda.

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166 Comintern, "Theses on the National and Colonial Question Adopted by the Second Comintern Congress" [1920], in *The Communist International, 1919–1943: Documents*, vol. 1, ed. J. Degras (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1971), 141, 143–144.

167 Comintern, "Theses on the Eastern Question Adopted by the Fourth Comintern Congress" [1922], in *The Communist International, 1919–1943: Documents*, vol. 1, 389.

168 Comintern, "Extracts from 'The Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries Adopted by the Sixth Comintern Congress'" [1928], in *The Communist International, 1919–1943: Documents*, vol. 2, 534.

169 Z. Mao, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party" [1939], in *Revolutionary Thought in the Twentieth Century*, ed. B. Turok (Johannesburg: Institute for African Alternatives, 1990), 77–79.



Secondly, there was a growing interest in Marxist circles in the idea that one class could carry out the “tasks” of another. Lenin argued that since the Russian bourgeoisie was unlikely to carry out a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the peasantry—which he considered a sort of petty bourgeoisie with anti-feudal interests—could play the a crucial role, albeit in alliance with the working class.<sup>170</sup> Trotsky’s theory of “permanent revolution” generalized this idea across late-developing countries, adding that the leading role of the working class (and its party, of course) in carrying out bourgeois-democratic “tasks” made it very likely that the revolution would proceed quickly to socialism.<sup>171</sup>

From the 1920s, Marxist communists increasingly argued that a rapid transition to a higher stage was feasible whenever the working class (represented, of course, by the party) became the leading force in national-democratic revolutions. Mao, for instance, argued that the Chinese revolution involved an alliance of peasants, petty bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie, and working class, but this, for historical reasons, had to be “led by the working class and the Communist Party.”<sup>172</sup> The revolution was a fight against the imperialism and “feudal forces” that hampered capitalist development,<sup>173</sup> a “national revolution to overthrow imperialism” that would “regulate” rather than “destroy” capitalism.<sup>174</sup> But the fact that the revolution was “led by the working class and the Communist Party” obviously implied a situation very different from that of newly independent India, for example. Within ten years, the party announced a shift to “building socialism” and “socialist construction.”<sup>175</sup>

The third and final point to note is that classical Marxism *did* admit the possibility of skipping stages altogether, usually through assistance from societies at higher stages. This possibility was first indicated by Marx. Although he viewed India as being at a pre-feudal stage,<sup>176</sup> he nonetheless believed that British colonialism was making India capitalist. For Russia, he suggested that traditional peasant communes could be a “starting point for communist

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170 See, for example, Lenin, “Two Tactics of Social-Democracy.”

171 See, for example, L. Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1986).

172 Mao, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship,” 379.

173 Z. Mao, “Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan” [1927], in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*, 28, 30.

174 Mao, “On People’s Democratic Dictatorship,” 372, 379, 384.

175 Z. Mao, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People” [1957], in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*, 433–434, 444–445.

176 See, for example, K. Shiozawa, “Marx’s View of Asian Society and his ‘Asiatic Mode of Production,’” *The Developing Economies* 4, no. 3 (1966): 299–315.

development" if a Russian revolution became "the signal for a "proletarian revolution in the West" that could assist ("complement") it.<sup>177</sup> Trotsky's permanent revolution model did not replace his view that successful socialist transitions in less developed countries required revolutions in, and material aid from, those in advanced countries.

Another approach to skipping stages emerged in Russia where, against all Marxist theory, the first revolutionary Marxist state in history had emerged in a vast, backward, war-ruined, and semi-feudal society. When the revolution failed to spread to more advanced countries, the ruling Marxists, now in charge of much of Russia and its former colonies, decided to make up the historical shortfall by deliberately building "socialism in one country" through state-led industrialization.<sup>178</sup> This approach would later be embraced by other Marxist regimes, such as China. The Comintern argued explicitly that alliance with the Soviet Union and (hoped-for) Western revolutionary regimes could enable "colonial and semi-colonial countries" to "avoid the stage of capitalist domination, perhaps even the development of capitalist relations in general," moving "with the aid of the victorious proletarian dictatorship in other countries, into the proletarian socialist revolution."<sup>179</sup>

In short, the strategies of the classical Marxist movement were deeply shaped by stage theory, and, despite the changes wrought by Lenin, a two-stage strategy for less-developed countries according to which bourgeois-/ national-democratic change comes first followed by socialism later. At the same time, there was room for flexibility in this model; the "Stalinists," far less mechanical than Trotskyists often claimed, proceeded quickly to the second (socialist) stage. In terms of practical politics, these ideas fostered alliances between Marxists and nationalists, allowed the Soviet Union (and later, regimes like China) to find allies among nationalists elsewhere, and, finally, facilitated the emergence of a number of Marxist revolutions from the womb of national liberation struggles, as in Vietnam and Mozambique.

Where, then, do the anarchists and syndicalists fit in? One crucial point of difference is that, as noted earlier, the anarchists rejected stages theory, and there is no equivalent in the anarchist literature of the classical Marxist debates over whether the immediate struggle was for bourgeois-democratic or

177 Marx and Engels, "Preface to the Second Russian Edition," 426.

178 S. Sherlock, "Berlin, Moscow and Bombay: The Marxism that India Inherited," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 21, no. 1 (1998): 63–76.

179 Comintern, "Extracts from 'The Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries,'" 533.

proletarian-socialist revolution, whether a Marxist party could substitute for bourgeois leadership in a national-democratic revolution and so on.

On the contrary, Bakunin stressed that the anarchists did not want a revolution that was “realizable only in the remote future” but rather the “completed and real emancipation of all workers, not only in some but in all nations, ‘developed’ and ‘undeveloped’” as an immediate aim.<sup>180</sup> In this model, the struggles against, for example, feudal relations or imperial rule are completely decoupled from the question of whether such battles enable a fuller development of capitalism and notions of historical stages toward socialism. Different struggles are not separated diachronically—that is, into a sequence that conforms to a model of historical stages, each with its own “tasks”—but take place simultaneously as a series of *concurrent* fronts of struggle by the revolutionary classes. Since historical schemas of progressive, sequential stages were “metaphysical fictions,”<sup>181</sup> and since capitalism, specifically, was not a historically necessary stage and did not evolve along the trajectory that Marxists claimed, there was no justification for attempts to integrate concerns about stages and strategy.

What counted was not the supposed stage of history, but the preparation and power of the peasantry and working class in a given moment. When Marx said of Bakunin that “economic conditions do not matter to him,” adding that “will, not economic conditions, is the foundation of his social revolution,”<sup>182</sup> he was not far off the mark. For Bakunin, what mattered was the *conscious* will of the revolutionary classes, informed by a “new social philosophy,” a “new faith” in the possibility of a new social order and in the ability of ordinary people to create it.<sup>183</sup> The “material conditions” and frustrated “needs” of the popular classes generated fundamental antagonisms toward capitalism, landlordism, and the state as well as a corresponding desire for “material well-being” and the ability to “live and work in an atmosphere of freedom.”<sup>184</sup> But this only promised the potential of radical change; in the very depths of “utmost poverty,” the masses often “fail to show signs of stirring.”<sup>185</sup>

This was precisely why organs of counter-power and a revolutionary counter-culture were essential to making the anarchist revolution. Such a revolution was “infinitely more than a series of insurrections,” “more than mere street-fighting, and much more than a mere change of government.” It was, rather,

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180 Bakunin, “Letter to *La Liberté*,” 284.

181 Kropotkin, “Modern Science and Anarchism,” 150–152.

182 Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms*, 69.

183 Bakunin, “The Program of the Alliance,” 249, 250–251.

184 Bakunin, “The Policy of the International,” 166–167.

185 Bakunin, “Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis,” 209; see also Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 335.

“a swift overthrow, in a few years, of institutions which have taken centuries to root into the soil” accompanied by “the birth of completely new ideas ... conceptions which soon become realities.”<sup>186</sup> It was, above all, the constructive activity of the popular classes, informed by a “new faith” that would change society.

As noted above, Kropotkin's analysis of the French Revolution gave most of the credit for the abolition of serfdom and absolute monarchy to the peasants and workers rather than to the bourgeoisie, which he presented as a brake on progress. These deep changes in the social structure were made from below; the politicians only later “sanctioned by law” what the peasants and others “had demanded during the last four years, and had already achieved here and there.”<sup>187</sup> The French peasants and workers, however, were held back by the “want of clearness in the mind of the people as to what they should hope from the Revolution”; whereas the bourgeoisie had a clear program, the people were hesitant, prejudiced, focused on “simple negations,” and lacking a “constructive” project.<sup>188</sup> They won lasting changes but ultimately remained oppressed as class society survived; in due course, this failure gave rise to modern socialism, including anarchism.<sup>189</sup> For the anarchists, in other words, the key consideration as to whether a socialist revolution was possible was not whether history had reached the correct stage in the development of the forces and relations of production, but whether the capacity and consciousness of the peasantry and proletariat had reached a point where these classes could defeat the ruling class and remake society.

There was, then, no need for the capitalist stage to be completed, or even begun. Furthermore, the anarchists consistently argued that it was *after* the revolution that key advances in the forces of production would be undertaken and that the revolution would lead to a massive jump in output as a result of new, just social relations. By way of a historical example, Kropotkin cited evidence that rural productivity and production rose greatly during the French Revolution; the peasant “plough[ed] the lands that he had taken back from the lords, the convents, the churches,” “ate his fill, straightened his back and dared to speak out,” and applied his “skill and energy.”<sup>190</sup>

While there is an odd parallel with Stalin's and Mao's idea that a revolutionary society could itself create the material conditions for progress rather than

186 Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1973*, vol. 1, 22–23.

187 Ibid., 145, 165; see; also Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1973*, vol. 2, 498–499.

188 Ibid., 33–34.

189 P. Kropotkin, “The Place of Anarchism in Socialistic Evolution” [1886], in *Direct Struggle Against Capital*, 115–116.

190 Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789–1973*, vol. 2, 594–595.

waiting until capitalism had matured, there are also essential differences. The anarchists envisaged a genuinely bottom-up process of innovation and growth based on cooperative relationships and democratic coordination, whilst Stalin and Mao relied on centralized state planning and coercion. Furthermore, anarchists and syndicalists never would have regarded the social relations of Stalinist Russia or Maoist China as in any sense egalitarian or socialist nor recognized such societies as a genuine transition away from capitalism.

The rejection of stages theory did not mean that Bakunin and Kropotkin considered issues of social and economic structure, specific political conditions, national and regional variations, or current developments irrelevant to revolutionary strategy. Bakunin's analyses elaborated strategy on the basis of "a detailed understanding of the relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class" at specific junctures in order to both disclose "suitable occasions" for revolution and to "avoid making tragic mistakes."<sup>191</sup> A notable example in this regard is his 1870 "Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis," written on the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, which elaborates a strategy of turning national conflict into social revolution that anticipated the 1871 Paris Commune in a truly astounding manner.<sup>192</sup> Another is his 1873 text *Statism and Anarchy*, which provides a detailed survey of revolutionary prospects in different parts of Europe.<sup>193</sup> Kropotkin's political interventions, too, were deeply shaped by careful analyses of contemporary realities. In the 1870s he stressed the model of the 1871 Paris Commune, "a new page in history";<sup>194</sup> a decade later, however, observing the rise of labor in France, he advocating working within the unions, taking care to understand the situation in "each locality."<sup>195</sup> (There are, of course, many anarchists who have been less careful, relying on abstract theory,<sup>196</sup> but this is not a unique or intrinsic anarchist failing, as the history of many Marxist groups attests).

Bakunin was also well aware of the fact that peasants were harder to organize than urban workers, and often more conservative, even "egoistic and reactionary," full of "prejudices" against revolution, and fiercely attached to private property.<sup>197</sup> But he rejected notions that peasants had to be led or organized by

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191 R. Berthier, "Putting the Record Straight on Mikhail Bakunin," trans. Nick Heath, *Libertarian Communist Review* 2 (1976): n.p.

192 Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis."

193 M. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* [1873], ed. M. Statz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), chapter 1.

194 Kropotkin, "Anarchist Communism," 51–52.

195 Kropotkin, "Workers' Organization," 307–308.

196 Berthier, "Putting the Record Straight on Mikhail Bakunin."

197 Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis," 189, 192.

other classes or by a revolutionary party or abolished through proletarianization, as under Marxist regimes. Rather, peasants had to be drawn into the revolutionary movement by applying the “determined treatment of revolutionary socialism” to the “rash of measles” of reactionary sentiment.<sup>198</sup> This required careful political work that paid close attention to peasant attitudes, grievances, and traditions.

Whereas Marx believed that the Russian peasant communes could be a “starting point for communist development” only if aided by “proletarian revolution in the West,”<sup>199</sup> this stages framework was absent in Bakunin’s thought. The same is true of Lenin’s and Mao’s insistence on working class (more precisely, Marxist party) leadership of the peasants. Bakunin did not view the obstacles to the peasant commune playing a revolutionary role in terms of the level of the forces of production or the supposed flaws of pre-proletarian exploited classes. Rather, these obstacles lay at the level of consciousness: the peasant villages had to overcome their “shameful patriarchal regime,” stifling lack of individual freedom, commitment to the “cult of the Tsar,” social and cultural isolation, and subjugation to landlords.<sup>200</sup> This required the “most enlightened peasants,” infused with anarchist ideas, to lead the challenge against the old ways, coordinate the villages, and unite the peasants with the workers—possibly assisted by radical intellectuals from the outside who “share their life, their poverty, their cause, and their desperate revolt.” Kropotkin’s position on this issue was very similar.<sup>201</sup>

Since the stages framework was absent from anarchism, the movement developed a large and impressive base within the colonial and postcolonial world from its emergence in the 1860s and 1870s. Indeed, much of the history of anarchism and syndicalism “took place in the ‘East’ and the ‘South,’ not in the ‘North’ and the ‘West.’”<sup>202</sup> The anarchists were always critical of imperialism and opposed national and racial oppression on principle. National freedom followed from the anarchist opposition to hierarchy and its emphasis on voluntary cooperation and self-management. The right of freely uniting and separating,” Bakunin wrote, “is the first and most important of all political rights.”<sup>203</sup>

198 Bakunin, “Letters to a Frenchman on the Current Crisis,” 189–192, 197, 208–209.

199 Marx and Engels, “Preface to the Second Russian Edition,” 426.

200 See Bakunin, “Statism and Anarchy,” 346–350.

201 P. Kropotkin, “Must We Occupy Ourselves With an Examination of the Ideal of a Future Society?” [1873], in *Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution*: P.A. Kropotkin, ed. M.A. Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970), 88–98, 100–101.

202 van der Walt and Hirsch, “Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism,” xl.

203 Quoted in Eltzbacher, *Anarchism*, 81.

There were important debates amongst anarchists and syndicalists over the correct approach to anti-imperialist and national liberation struggles, but key issues that concerned the classical Marxists—such as whether imperialism played a historically progressive or reactionary role, or whether bourgeois-/national-democratic revolutions were necessary in the colonial world, did not feature in them. Rather, these debates centered on whether—and if so, how—anti-imperialist and national struggles linked to the anarchist revolution. In other words, they concerned the place of such struggles in the overall strategy for revolutionary change rather than their role in a larger historical schema structured around successive stages. There were three main positions in this regard,<sup>204</sup> each of which asserted a fundamental opposition to imperialism but varied in its attitude toward nationalism and its assessment of the tasks of the libertarians in relation to national liberation struggles.

The first of these anarchist and syndicalist approaches held that national liberation struggles were fundamentally futile inasmuch as they were bound to simply replace foreign with local oppressors. Because such struggles would involve multi-class movements, they would easily be local elites who would constitute new, independent states. National liberation movements were too narrow; whether the new national ruling class could, or would, advance the forces of production was irrelevant. The second approach, by contrast, actively and uncritically embraced nationalism on the grounds that an independent state, for all its limitations, was a step forward—a valuable reform worthy of support.

Both of these approaches essentially identified national liberation movements with *nationalism*, which is an ideology that seeks to unite all members of a given nation to establish a state that can express the national will. The difference is that one views nationalism as an obstacle to the anarchist revolution and so, essentially absents itself from national liberation movements, while the other views nationalism as a relatively progressive force, and so, essentially gives nationalism uncritical support, deferring the anarchist revolution to later. There is an odd parallel here to the two-stage approach to struggle in the colonial and postcolonial world found in the Marxist tradition, although the anarchists' two-stage approach had little to do with notions of the necessity of a bourgeois-democratic or national-democratic revolution. Rather, it seems to have arisen from a pessimistic assessment of the prospects for anarchist

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204 van der Walt and Hirsch, "Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism," lv–lxvii. See also L. van der Walt, "Pour Une Histoire de L'anti-impérialisme Anarchiste: 'Dans Cette Lutte, Seuls Les Ouvriers et Les Paysans Iront Jusqu'au Bout,'" *Refractions* 8 (2002): 27–37.

revolution, which was deferred to a vague future,<sup>205</sup> or in situations where national survival and unity seemingly overrode other differences.

The third anarchist and syndicalist position on national liberation struggles argued, on the contrary, that nationalism was only *one* current in anti-imperialist and national liberation struggles and suggested that anarchists could shape these struggles by pushing them in the direction of an internationalist and anti-statist social revolution. That is, while the anarchists could work alongside nationalists and others in these struggles, they would contest them, seeking ideological hegemony and a radical decolonization that would secure the demands of the popular classes for social and economic as well as national freedom through an anarchist society.

### Conclusion

This chapter has set out to provide a more systematic analysis of the differences and similarities between Marxism and anarchism by unpacking their strategic and analytical similarities and differences. It has sought to move beyond caricature and non-debate as well as the traditional reduction of issues to the Marx-Bakunin conflict. This has required a discussion of the larger classical Marxist tradition, including in the years after Marx, as well as closer attention to anarchists other than Bakunin (most notably Kropotkin) and to issues often absent from the literature, such as the differences and similarities between the traditions' analyses of, for example, bourgeois revolutions and their approaches to anti-colonial struggles. Although differences in strategy have been an important part of this discussion, I have sought to show how these are deeply embedded in different conceptions of economy, society, and history and to outline the essential elements of these differences.

It is not only important to move beyond the "non-debate between Marxist and anarchist tendencies on the revolutionary left,"<sup>206</sup> but also to recognize that it is precisely because the two *differ* significantly that such a debate is possible and valuable. This is also why recent calls for a synthesis of anarchism and Marxism run aground. The notion that a synthesis is possible because the differences are very limited is shown to be false when examined dispassionately. Excesses, errors, and crude polarizations have marred many anarchist-Marxist exchanges, but these exchanges reflect the existence of the division;

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205 See, for example, A. Dirlik, *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991), chapter 11.

206 Blackledge, "Anarchism, Syndicalism and Strategy."



they are not its cause. The related notion that a synthesis is necessary because the two sides complement one another—anarchism being strong on ethics and vision, Marxism being strong on theory—is also false. Anarchism has a substantial, and rich body of theory, some of which overlaps with Marxism,<sup>207</sup> so arguments that justify synthesis on the grounds that anarchism lacks adequate theory are spurious<sup>208</sup> and reproduce the unfair charge—often made by Marxists—that anarchism lacks analytical rigor.

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207 Berthier, *Social-Democracy and Anarchism*, 162–163.

208 See, for example, M. Bookchin, *The Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy* (London: Verso, 2014), 160–161, 164.

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## Anarchism and Existentialism

*Shane Wahl*

### Introduction

One way to approach the relationship between anarchist philosophy and existentialist philosophy would be to trace the historical connections between the two and provide an account of how certain thinkers in both “schools” share philosophical and pragmatic concerns, questions, and maybe even answers. Such an approach has the merits of comprehensiveness and perhaps exhaustiveness on its side. This method would give ample breadth to the relationship and its philosophical underpinning, providing a full account of historical and theoretical connections. While this chapter is meant to give a solid overview along these lines, I am also mostly concerned with developing a “philosophy of the future” for anarchist-existentialists (or existentialist-anarchists). A key part of this, in my view, is to grapple with a major problem that confronts both the existentialist and the anarchist at the theoretical and practical level. This is the problem of the supposed (or maybe assumed) distinction—sometimes held to be hard and fast—between the “individual” and the “social.”

Focusing on this particular issue will provide some depth to the discussion. Anarchism has varying degrees of “individualism” built-in theoretically, that is, there are different kinds of anarchists seeking different understandings of how anarchism is to operate in terms of individual liberty versus social cohesion, often with some strong skepticism for the possibility of the latter in anarchist theory and practice.<sup>1</sup> The practical issue regarding the individual and social cannot be overlooked. A “common sense” understanding of anarchism as somewhat synonymous with “chaos” breeds an outlook of dismissal of any claims of it “working” in any kind of truly social setting. Furthermore, anyone who has actually spent time as an activist and member of anarchist groups and collectives will understand that there are issues of social cohesion “on the ground” even amidst consensus-based formations.

On the other hand, existentialism has been seen quite often as fundamentally individualistic mainly as a result of its purported claim to subjectivism—the

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<sup>1</sup> This range may be represented in Benjamin Tucker and Max Stirner on the one end, and the various anarcho-communists, collectivists, and syndicalists on the other end.



view, here, that what is true, good, and beautiful is merely a matter of individual taste or perspective due to certain constraints on objectivity and even meaning altogether. Individuals are then claimed to be in primary conflict with one another in some way, and this makes any kind of social existentialism dubious, or even absurd.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter, then, proceeds as follows. Keeping with the merits of the “breadth” approach, the first section provides some definitions and then develops a brief historical context for the nineteenth-century developments (“origins” is too strong a word) of both anarchism and existentialism, with a discussion of many of the prominent figures involved. The second section traces the philosophical connections between anarchism and existentialism, and centers on the collapse of meaning ushered in by the “death of God.” An argument I will put forward here is that existentialism and “classical” anarchism may both be seen as operating in the tension between modernism and post-modernism, as both the break with the past and the hopeful embrace of the absurd into the future. With the death of God there is a vacuum of meaning, morality, explanation, and order, and both the existentialists and the anarchists were deeply skeptical of attempts by humans to put human institutions in the place of this dead God. The third section is an extended look at the thought of two philosophers—Jean-Paul Sartre and Emma Goldman (with a short discussion of Albert Camus as well). That section advances the individual/social problem as a real one for both anarchists and existentialists, yet as a problem which can be overcome within the resources of both philosophical traditions. Sartre and Goldman are the main vehicles to elucidate that argument.

### A Brief History of Two Ideas

Without getting too carried away with quibbling over definitions, I will claim that existentialism, or existential philosophy, refers to an orientation of creativity in the face of a nihilistic world. The existentialist holds that human beings are responsible for creating meaning in this nihilistic world. One could, here, get mired in the “nihilistic world” half of this definition, and there is good reason given how important such concepts as anxiety, dread, despair, and forlornness are in the history of existentialism. The other half, though, is often overlooked in its radical openness. This call to creativity should be thought of, at least with all things being equal, as liberating. There is no authority with a

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2 Even Robert Solomon refers to the “extreme individualism” of existentialism. See Robert C. Solomon, *Introducing the Existentialists* (Indianapolis, In.: Hackett, 1981), vii.

legitimate hold over the manufacture and distribution of meaning in life, no matter how much such authorities (church, state, media, etc.) may try to make and disseminate meaning.

Nineteenth-century philosophers were coming to terms with the developments of the Enlightenment and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in Europe. A tremendous faith in reason, human intuition, human progress, and the ability for man to be the “measure of all things” had taken humanity away from faith in supernatural beings and divine inspiration. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophical system was the grand totalizer, subsuming the individual and particular into the general, moving beyond Kant’s formalistic and timeless systematizing and allowing history to usher forth as part of humankind’s destiny as a movement of “absolute spirit.”<sup>3</sup> The “progress” of mass production and industrialization generated skepticism and suspicion among some philosophers who were leery of the era of rapid development. My discussion of three existential thinkers includes two such 19th century philosophers of suspicion, Soren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Kierkegaard’s attempt to go beyond Hegel’s system and the totalization of the rational is really an attempt to rescue the prospects of individuality. Even religious faith, by the 19th century, was apparently rational and thus communicable; religious faith now was a part of the “system” and could be *generally* understood. Kierkegaard rejects this (quite famously, with his discussion of Abraham in *Fear and Trembling*<sup>4</sup>) and seeks a path out for human freedom. What one finds, however, is that freedom is terrifying and anxiety-inducing—thus people flee from it in favor of the public opinion of the herd, to the safety of the congregation, etc. The march of the Enlightenment and human progress cannot conquer the fundamental question of the meaning of existence, even a Darwinian and intelligent biological view of life does not answer this question for the being that questions being. Kierkegaard seeks an “outside” where both the human individual and God are located in relationship to one another. Kierkegaard’s edification of this individual is really a call for each person to *become a self* and not be overcome by the mass production of *subjects* of modern society. Even with God, there is the necessity of self-choice and construction in

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3 This is a bit unfair to Hegel, looking back, but as a whole the totalization of Hegel’s system was understood by the existentialists as obliterating the lived experience of the individual person. For a compelling recent attempt at “liberalizing” Hegel, see Sybol Cook Anderson, *Hegel’s Theory of Recognition: From Oppression to Ethical Liberal Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

4 Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983).

the face of nihilism. The endgame, for Kierkegaard, results in a radical ethics of love for “the neighbor” which defies the comforts of materialism and “objective justification” required by modern society.<sup>5</sup>

Nietzsche’s attack on philosophical modernity is quite pervasive in that it challenges the very moral, religious, epistemological, and ontological “grounds” of modernity in a blistering analysis which leaves a profound openness of meaning, or an abyss, to use one of a Nietzschean term. Nietzsche’s response to the fundamental fact of nihilism is to embrace life, and dance in the face of the lack of meaning, the Truth, the Good, and the Beautiful. For Nietzsche, human beings are actually best viewed as the *becoming of drives and the interplay of these drives*, expressing drives through inner power struggles of the psyche.<sup>6</sup> The practical import of this is Nietzsche’s “perspectivism” which is the view that individuals (as forces of drives) never can claim a robust assurance of “the truth” coming from some authority, but must, rather, seek additional perspectives for some kind of understanding of meaning and personal morality of strength and health. A person is the expression of his or her drives, and there seems to be some semblance of control over whether these drives will be expressions of vitality and the affirmation of life, or expressions of decadence and the negation of life.<sup>7</sup> The confrontation with the utter lack of objective meaning is a spur for creativity and overcoming those weaknesses that prevent the affirmation of life. Here, I will briefly note that there are remarkable similarities between Nietzsche’s views and those of many anarchist thinkers of the 19th century, and these similarities are not the result of any

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5 This summary of Kierkegaard glosses over a lot, but it is a basic characterization of the essential elements of two of the most important works in the history of existentialism. See Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992) and Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1998).

6 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Dawn*, trans. Brittain Smith (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), section 38 and section 115, section 119, section 167, and section 560; Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), third essay, section 9; and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, eds. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), section 6, section 36, and section 189. One could go on and on in textual defense of this claim that human beings, for Nietzsche, are the becoming of drives (and the relation between drives).

7 This is not the place for a sustained discussion of different interpretations of Nietzsche’s view of freedom, especially as it relates to philosophy of mind.

significant influence between Nietzsche and the anarchists. Instead, the embrace of life, the denouncement of being in favor of becoming, the playful and experimental response to all kinds of “authorities” claiming to have objective foundations, and the view of the individual as a decentering flux of power (force) and drives instead of the modern subject all arose independently for Nietzsche and the anarchists.<sup>8</sup>

Sartre is the figure most closely associated with existentialism, and it is with Sartre that the most thorough-going discussions of responsibility for creating value in a nihilistic world can be found. For Sartre, as it was similarly for Kierkegaard, human reality is bifurcated between what might be called one’s “thingliness” and one’s “transcendence” of that thingliness, namely consciousness. Human beings are responsible for creating meaning as there are no recipes for meaning and morality “out there” to find and utilize. Consciousness entails a robust freedom to choose one’s own self-direction, yet this freedom is terrifying. It appears to be much easier to flee from the possibilities of existence and to the stale necessities of objective thingliness, where our choices are made for us.<sup>9</sup> The “later Sartre” is directly concerned with issues surrounding social organization and the formation of groups, particularly those who are engaged in common activity (such as revolutionary activity). He essentially tries to merge his Marxism with his existentialism. The result is a clearly anarchic outlook on the nature of social groupings and the resistance against more rigid orderings of individuals into groups such as organizations. Forget the institutions of State.<sup>10</sup>

While this overview of existentialism does not delve into other existentialist thinkers like Kafka, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Marcel, Camus,<sup>11</sup> and so forth, it is meant to show some fundamental general commitments that existentialists all share: concern for the individual, questioning the subject in favor of individual freedom, resistance against totalization and “grand narratives” of meaning and morality, and the idea that responsibility is a cornerstone of lived experience. It is this “lived experience” that will eventually serve to tie existentialism and

8 For a more detailed account, see John Moore and Spencer Sunshine, eds., *I Am Not a Man, I Am Dynamite!: Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition* (New York: Autonomedia, 2005).

9 For the discussion of “bad faith,” see Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, ed. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), 47–70.

10 See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason Volume One*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (New York: Verso, 2004). A summary of Sartre’s position is provided below.

11 Albert Camus likely appears to be the biggest exclusion here, though I do briefly delve into his merging of existentialism and anarchism below.

anarchism together in the next section. I also do not want this “brief history” to sound as though existentialism is dead and gone. It certainly is not, if by that one would think of its death as the end of individual existentialists. There still are plenty out there, especially when one considers the full range of existential literature and art.<sup>12</sup> Academically, existentialism never really caught fire in the United States in the first place, and then it quickly fell out of favor with many philosophers who took up either structuralism or post-structuralism (or both). The time is coming, however, when new eyes will look back to existential thinking post post-structuralism, and the final section will address those new eyes.

Turning to anarchism, it is important to note that resistance to state authority has a long history.<sup>13</sup> From Bao Jingyan (300 C.E.) to William Godwin (late 18th century) and Charles Fourier (early 19th century), proclamations of individual liberty against state oppression were relevant and prevalent before the full-fledged movements of anarchism and the anarchist theorists of the 19th century. That century erupted with the thought of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Max Stirner, Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and Errico Malatesta, among many others. These anarchists saw more clearly than Karl Marx and other socialists of varying degrees just how nefarious the capitalist system of economics was for the human race, namely that when coupled with state power the nexus formed between capital and the state heightened both systems to maximal oppression. These thinkers realized that all coercive centralized power was destructive to humanity, and not even a successful eradication of capitalism was going to free human beings from this destruction. This early period of anarchist history has come to be labelled “classical anarchism” which is a label that I will use here, with no pejorative connotations meant at all. I will turn to three of the above theorists to draw out a brief sketch of anarchism, namely Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. These three figures are not meant to be taken as anything but key exemplars of anarchist thought in the 19th century (and early 20th century, in Kropotkin’s case). The same kind of sketch of classical anarchism could be made with three different anarchists of the time, but these three are particularly prolific and (in)famous.

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12 One only needs to look to film: Darren Aronofsky, David Fincher, David Lynch, Jean-Luc Godard, Ethan and Joel Coen, and Terrence Malick are prime examples of filmmakers who have made deeply existential films.

13 Robert Graham, *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Vol. 1* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005).

Proudhon's "as man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy"<sup>14</sup> ushers in his positive vision of a society which resists the coercive hierarchy of private productive property in favor an anarchy devoted to mutualism, or the radically equal ownership of the means of production, individually or collectively. Proudhon was already resisting the movement of liberal democracy as the end all be all of human progress; that is he realized quite early that the foundation of the liberal democratic state as the proper destiny for human growth was deeply erroneous and was bringing forth new kinds of oppression masked in liberal values like freedom and equality.<sup>15</sup> Proudhon actually looked beyond the nation-state, to international anarchy—the lack of an overarching authority above individual nation states—as a template for social relations and anarchy within states.<sup>16</sup>

Bakunin accurately predicted that socialism without anarchy would lead to new oppressions as the State, in whatever form, will always seek to perpetuate itself and centralize power. He was also keenly aware of the escapism provided by both religion and alcohol from the toil of labor and lack of time and energy for rest and creative endeavors. The lived experiences of human beings shape how they view the world and how they try to escape from it. This led directly to Bakunin's call for revolution as the real way to overcome this terrible situation for workers instead of fleeing from it. This revolution can serve to free humans from alienating conditions and allow for the construction of a new "second existence"<sup>17</sup> that lifts up and creates the embrace of life instead of flight away from life. The revolution is not merely a social revolution, but an internal one as well—"revolt against himself"<sup>18</sup>—in order to shed oppressive ideologies,

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14 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property?: An Inquiry Into the Principle of Right and of Government*, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), section 277.

15 "What is democracy? The sovereignty of the nation, or rather, of the national majority. But it is, in both cases the sovereignty of man instead of the sovereignty of the law, the sovereignty of the will instead of the sovereignty of the reason; in one word, the passions instead of justice. Undoubtedly, when a nation passes from the monarchical to the democratic state, there is *progress*, because in multiplying the sovereigns we increase the opportunities of the reason to substitute itself for the will; but in reality there is no revolution in the government, since the principle remains the same. Now, we have the proof to-day that, with the most perfect democracy, we cannot be free" (ibid., section 33).

16 Alex Prichard, *Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

17 Mikhail Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism*, ed. G.P. Maximoff (London: The Free Press, 1953), 110.

18 Mikhail Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, ed. and trans. Sam Dolgoff (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 239.

or in Nietzschean terms, to overcome certain weaknesses within the self that stultify expression and the affirmation of life.

Kropotkin shares many of these views about lived experience and about human nature's malleability. The human subject is not a simple unity, but a multitude of faculties and drives, capable of varying expressions and enhancements. These faculties can be developed in a way to promote cooperation and mutual aid between people, in order to create a society freed from the alienating effects of competition in the productive domain. The contrast between competition and cooperation, or between oppressive ways of organizing society and free ways of organizing society can be seen clearly in the conflict between capital and labor. The pursuit of wealth and things means that what is valued is ultimately inhuman; the pursuit of life and life's work in cooperation with others means that what is valued is deeply human.<sup>19</sup>

Twentieth-century and contemporary anarchism can only be understood by making it plural: there are only anarchisms, and these have often come about through narrowing down to certain oppressive targets. Focusing in on certain issues has created a massive amount of anarchist literature in the past one hundred years, from anarchy-feminism to green anarchism, from platformism to insurrectionist anarchism, from "post-left" anarchism to "post-anarchism" and so on. One can get lost in these distinctions and this is to miss the point. The point to be gathered from these fractures and splinters is that there are anarchisms which are flourishing all over, across all sorts of different academic disciplines, across the globe, and along a myriad of different flights away from coercive authorities wherever they may be found. I turn some of my attention away from the contemporary situation for the next section for a few different reasons, but one of them is because a lot of contemporary anarchism is heavily influenced by philosophical thinking after existentialism (namely post-structuralism) and that gets out of sync with the purposes of this chapter.

The account of "classical anarchism" is not meant to be exhaustive, but the point was to draw out some certain characteristics, especially in relation to lived experience, the promotion of life in itself and as a value, and the view of human nature as something not given and fixed. These are shared by the existentialists as well, in general, and this will be the subject of the next section. These classical anarchists and the existentialists are located in the tension—a space, a crack, or a gulf?—between modernism and postmodernism. An elaboration of this claim will then lend itself nicely to the third section, which is

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19 For an overview of life under "anarchist communism," see Peter Kropotkin, *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, ed. R. Baldwin (New York Benjamin Blom, 1968), 46–78.

focused on the problem of the individual versus the social for contemporary anarchists and contemporary existentialists.

### Philosophical Connections between Anarchism and Existentialism

By way of a “brief history of two ideas” I have laid out a foundation for understanding the relationship between anarchism and existentialism, and here I build on this foundation. First, both the classical anarchists and the existentialists question foundations, in particular the Cartesian-Kantian-Hegelian foundations of modernism with regard to subject and object. Second, the “death of God” opened the door for all kinds of new valuations, and both the anarchists and the existentialists run through the door to live experienced and the promotion of life and new understandings of responsibility. Nihilism is embraced and overcome (as a problem). Third, this bleeds into (for Nietzsche) or blows up into (the anarchists, including Sartre) a rejection of the new liberal democratic states and the “progress” of the State in the West as it marched onward with capitalism. Finally, any positive post-rejection outcome must deal with the family of questions regarding the relationship between human beings, with a complete spectrum of understandings of this relationship ranging from “strict individualism” to full-blown communist collectivism.

What is philosophical modernity? Again, I do not want to get caught up in the intricacies of providing a perfect definition that would rigidly provide a set of characteristics. There is no such perfect definition for philosophical modernity. A general definition can work pretty well for my purposes here, however. Philosophical modernity is the movement commencing in the early seventeenth century that ushered in new understandings of the world and knowledge which did not rely on traditional, “God-centered” bases for morality, truth, and reality. This leaves the world a disenchanted place where rationalization (scientific method, use of logic and reason coupled with empiricism), individualism, industrialization, and secularization have taken over.

Epistemologically, this meant that new foundations needed to be established for knowledge. On one side were the rationalists like Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, and on the other side the empiricists like Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Central to both camps, though, is the idea that the human subject secures all certain (rationalism) or probabilistic (empiricism) knowledge through either rational intuition or sense experience. Kant “bridges the gap” with his answer that knowledge of our phenomenal world comes through both. Hegel’s idealism brings history into the equation, furthering Kant’s critique of dogmatic metaphysics. Embedded in all of this is the notion of the subject. The subject



undergoes experience. The activity of the mind is the bedrock for Descartes and still the propelling force for Hegel. The human being is this mix of doing and undergoing, representing the world through ideas fostered by the active and passive mind in tandem. Subject and object are connected through the mind's representation.

Now for the purposes of this chapter, what is most important is how this relates to ethics and political philosophy. The anarchist is acting against something insidious in political modernity. The life of the mind is—clearly—of profound importance for these moderns. This is not to say some “universal mind” or a collection of minds, but the individual mind, with its opaqueness to other individual minds. Each mind is its own little atom, or island, unto itself. Given this, the rise of political liberalism and the notion of universal, human rights held by individuals should not be that surprising. Robert Talisse has generated a definition of liberalism that is quite appropriate. The five fundamental commitments of liberalism are:

1. Primacy of the individual. The individual is the fundamental unit of analysis in political theorizing.
2. Moral individualism. The good of each individual is morally prior to the good of a collection of individuals.
3. Moral Autonomy. It is properly the prerogative of the individual to identify, select, and pursue a conception of the good.
4. Political non-interference. The state is justified in obstructing an individual in her pursuit of her individual conception of the good only in cases where her action interferes with another's pursuit of his own good.
5. Political neutrality. State action and policy must be neutral among various conceptions of the good that citizens might rightfully adopt.

These commitments highlight the values of individuality, autonomy, tolerance, and equality for the liberal (and probably in that order).<sup>20</sup> Human beings are rational and self-interested by nature, according to this view. The fictional “state of nature” hearkens back to a time of lawless, wild humans in conflict with one another and only in need of the state in order to provide defense, protect property, or promote the general social welfare of the people to some at least minimal degree.

An exaggerated preoccupation with this last point distinguishes many socialisms from this kind of liberalism, at least in Europe today. The socialists

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20 Robert Talisse, *Democracy After Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 16–20.

of the nineteenth century like Marx were more inclined to realize that fundamental power relations needed radical changing, not benign “progressive” reforms. Workers actually seizing power and collectively owning the means of production and productive property is a different sort of animal than reformist and “rights-based” formalistic or legalistic liberalism. The same metaphysics and epistemology are basically involved here, however, other than an enhanced definition of the individual that actually includes one’s social relations as having some defining power for the individual. What differs really are the values that get promoted more robustly (equality and tolerance) among socialists. This led many socialists to target capitalism as in need of surpassing/eradicating/overthrowing in order to properly promote economic equality and economic power. The anarchists argued against both of these movements in modernity, even if sharing many of these values in theory. The union of the liberal democratic state with capitalism was (and is, of course) too tight of a bond to simply try to shed one or the other. The depiction above of modernity’s basic outline for the self and for political philosophy sets the stage for the remainder of this chapter.

What I maintain about classical anarchism and existentialism is that the similarities in philosophical outlooks, ideas, and theories between the two indicate a shared understanding of the world with differences between the two really being reducible to differences in points of emphasis. Both existentialism and classical anarchism arose out of confrontation with modernity, with the existentialists primarily concerned with man’s search for, or creation of, meaning in life, and the anarchists primarily concerned with social and political philosophy and practice. Modernity’s failure of delivering liberation, equality, and justice, on the one hand, and its success at delivering new ways of oppression, dehumanization, and suffering, on the other hand, were simply too much for both the existentialists and the anarchists to handle. The existentialist identification of anxiety, despair, and absurdity is to the modern condition what the anarchist identification of moral evils, new oppressions, and the need for smashing is to the modern condition! Both philosophies broke out of modernity and developed something new. I propose that both the existentialists and the anarchists give very similar answers to the phenomenon of modernity. One can look back and see the existentialists and the anarchists as operating in the tension between modernity and what would later be called post-modernity.

The first of the four avenues for understanding the intersection of anarchism and existentialism is the question of the subject, or self. While some sense of “self” is still very present in Kierkegaard, and “consciousness” is central to Sartre’s early existentialism, these notions play out differently than they do in modern philosophy. Kierkegaard’s view of the self is that the self is a project

of self-choosing (over and over) and creation in resoluteness both against totalization and in the leap of faith. Sartre's distinction between pre-reflective and reflective consciousness demonstrates the constructed "nature" of the ego, which is altogether a very different notion of subjectivity than that found in Cartesian modernism.<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche clearly decenters the self in a way that gives priority to unconscious drives, and questions any capital "T" truth about subject and world. For Bakunin, a human being is largely a product of his or her environment. The self is not an isolated atom, but largely conditioned by one's social relations with others, though the individual still must then work at conditioning the environment and creating oneself.<sup>22</sup> People are "always predetermined and particularized by a confluence of geographic, climatic, ethnographic, hygienic, and economic influence, which constitute the nature of his family, his class, his nation, his race."<sup>23</sup> Kropotkin has a similar view, highlighting the role of the unconscious in human existence. Both Bakunin and Kropotkin view the human self as complex and as always becoming. As Jun writes, "The subject is internally divided, fractured, fragmented ... a product of forces struggling within itself, which in turn is an expression of the struggle of social forces."<sup>24</sup> Finally, Proudhon, in criticizing both modern philosophers and "Christian dogma," writes: "Neither understands ... that everything in [humanity] is, as every period of its development, in the individual as in the mass, proceeds from the same principle, which is not being, but becoming."<sup>25</sup>

The "death of God" is a shattering of foundations and grand narratives. The grand narrative "God" that united human knowledge, morality, and meaning gave way to science, human attempts at "objective" moral doctrines, and an abyss of meaning. "God" as an idol underwent a death at the hands of human murderers who moved "forward" in their quest for knowledge. Even if human beings are not fully aware of this loss of God, or if only some of them are aware at all of this event, the ramifications are still presented in the form of

21 With regard to Kierkegaard, see, for example, Mark C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel and Kierkegaard* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000) and Claire Carlisle, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Becoming: Movements and Positions* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2005). With regard to Sartre, see Nik Farrell Fox, *The New Sartre: Explorations in Post-Modernism* (New York: Continuum, 2003) and Stephen Priest, *The Subject in Question: Sartre's Critique of Husserl in Transcendence of the Ego* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

22 Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 257.

23 Ibid., 240.

24 Nathan Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 146.

25 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *System of Economic Contradictions, or The Philosophy of Misery*, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker (Cambridge, Mass.: Wilson, 1888), section 420.

nihilism. This rendering of the world “out there” as objectively valueless makes humanity scramble.

I maintain that there are four general possible responses to the death of god. First, a “resurrection” can be attempted in the form of further “great awakenings” and the attempt to keep theocratic elements closely tied to societal functions. Second, a complete nihilism can overwhelm in the form of total relativism and/or the pursuit of wealth and material possessions. Third, some other kind of “objective” placeholder can replace this dead “God” whether in the form of a well-intentioned Kantian moral system or the nefarious Third Reich. All attempts made by the State to dominate human existence fit into this third potential outcome. Fourth—and this is the alternative that both the existentialists and the anarchists prefer—a different kind of subjective understanding of human reality can render the “objective” place and the placeholder as irrelevant and unnecessary. Life has value; life is the value! This entails an embrace of “play” and joy in the absence of objective meaning, where humans can even create illusions of stable meaning to form “rules of the game” in terms of moral, social, and political philosophy. This, of course, runs counter to the “human, all-too human” methods of new forms of control and domination, whether it be found in fascism or the kinder oppressions of liberalism and socialism.<sup>26</sup>

The new faith of “human progress” was met with contempt by Nietzsche, who thought it all-too-human to propose to replace God with a new attempt at “human” objectivity. The State centers itself as the new power source, the thing to be feared, loved, and made the foundation of what it means to be a subject (as citizen, or worse, taxpayer, or, in Nietzschean terms a member of the herd). This attempt at grasping at objective meaning results in folly, for the existentialist. Sartre rejected modern liberalism and—while he was active as a

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26 For the purposes of this chapter, I am not going into any elaborate detail of the death of god and my interpretation of it for Nietzsche, existentialism, and anarchism. The issue has still not been given the full treatment it requires. That said, there are a number of more recent books addressing the death of God which bring to light some important problems. See John P. Manoussakis, ed., *After God: Richard Kierney and the Religious Turn in Continental Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006); John D. Caputo and Gianni Vattimo, *After the Death of God*, ed. Jeffrey Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Julian Young, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Robert P. Williams, *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God: Studies in Hegel and Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and Terry Eagleton, *Culture and the Death of God* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014).

“Marxist” of some stripe—referred to himself as an anarchist<sup>27</sup> as his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* ends up making clear even without the direct admission in that book. Recall Talisse’s definition of liberal democracy above. What is really at issue is how this centralized power can be justified when considering the essential rights of the individual, whatever they may be. The key to this relationship between State and citizen is representation, that is, the substitution of “representative decision-making” for the “will of the people.” Representation is a fundamental red flag for anarchists,<sup>28</sup> to put it mildly. Not one to put things mildly, Bakunin writes “the whole system of representative government is an immense fraud resting on this fiction: that the executive and legislative bodies elected by universal suffrage of the people must or can even possibly represent the will of the people.”<sup>29</sup> Liberal movements inspire change and then fall terribly short of bringing about the kind of radical alteration of the lives of humans, yet these movement couch and coach themselves in the language of values for emancipation and equality.

Finally, the tension between the individual and the social realm is found in both existentialism and anarchism, with all kinds of different ways to carve up the relationships between human beings. Kierkegaard’s devotion to the singular individual is strong, but stronger yet is his radical ethics of loving the neighbor. Nietzsche rejects all kinds of attempts to overwhelm the individual with the herd, but he also has a strong admiration for agonistic contest<sup>30</sup> and a kind of social account of responsibility.<sup>31</sup> Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is a theory of social ensembles, moving from the sole existing individual through various collective and group formations, and the tension that arises in the “pledged group” and certainly in the “organization” is very clear. Within anarchism, one could cite a lot of theoretical arguments here, but it is in actual practice where the true tensions arise. This is true whether one is speaking of

27 Jean-Paul Sartre and Michael Contat, “Sartre at Seventy: An Interview in *The New York Review of Books*,” trans. Paul Auster and Lydia Davis (7 Aug. 1975), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1975/aug/07/sartre-at-seventy-an-interview>.

28 For the most nuanced and well-researched argument about anarchism and representation see Jesse S. Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, and Politics* (Selinsgrove, Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 2006).

29 Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 220–221.

30 For representative and sustained discussions of Nietzsche and agonism, see Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) and Lawrence J. Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy: An Experiment in Postmodern Politics* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1999).

31 See Daniel Harris, “Nietzsche’s Social Account of Responsibility” in *Southwest Philosophy Review* 28, no. 1 (2012): 103–110.

the different practical interests between individualist anarchists and anarcho-communists, or how problems may develop within anarchist collectives and groups in figuring out the processes of decision-making, especially with regard to direct action. This issue warrants its own section, and it will wrap up with a kind of prescription for going forward for both existentialists and anarchists.

### The Individual and the Social

The first section traced a history of anarchism and existentialism in broad and brief terms, with emphasis on some basic notions about life and living that both share in contrast with much of philosophical modernity. The second section drew these notions out in much stronger detail, and laid out points of convergence: the questioning/rejection of the “modern” subject, the response to the death of “God” and the immediate place-holding successor, the human, in all its eerily similar ways, and the issue of social relations and the status of the individual (no longer a “subject”). The result is that there is the world out there turned on its head in the 19th century with its decentered subjects and its failed attempts at removing the tyranny of “God’s placeholder” through secular means. In my view, existentialist-anarchism, or anarchist-existentialism, is all-too-neglected by, not only the “established” intellectuals, but also the existentialists and anarchists, respectively.<sup>32</sup>

This final section draws out the problem of social relations. What I mean is there is a tension within both existentialism and anarchism between the individual and the social, whether it be at the theoretical or practical (for anarchists) level. Caricatures of Sartrean existentialism focus heavily on Sartre’s idea that “conflict”<sup>33</sup> is at the root of relations between individuals and that “hell is other people.”<sup>34</sup> This view is wildly overly simplistic, as has been discussed by others.<sup>35</sup> What is true is that individual humans experience the world in often alienated ways, and this can be the result of societal demands

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32 It is of course important to give proper respect to three very relevant exceptions to my claim, viz., Herbert Read, Peter Marshall, and L. Susan Brown. See Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: HarperCollins, 2008), Herbert Read, *Existentialism, Marxism, and Anarchism: Chains of Freedom* (London: Freedom Press, 1949), and L. Susan Brown, *The Politics of Individualism: Liberalism, Liberal Feminism, and Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993).

33 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 364.

34 Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and Three Other Plays*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage, 1989), 45.

35 Robert Bernasconi, *How to Read Sartre* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 33.

and conditions. Sartre basically leaves the issue alone and focuses on the political realm where he traces the actual prospects for solidarity with others, as does Camus.

Not only does anarchism face this issue of the individual vs. the social at the theoretical level (again, the Max Stirner and Benjamin Tucker individualists on the one end, and the anarcho-communists on the other), but it rears its head in actively engaged anarchist praxis undertaken by collectives. This all should really come as no major surprise as activism in groups is difficult, to say the least. Direct action (engaged praxis) which does not involve “getting everyone on the same page” when it comes to confrontation with police.

Now, a word about the inclusion of Camus in the final section devoted mainly to Sartre and Goldman. Camus’ philosophy of rebellion is driven by the understanding of the absurdity of existence and the attempt to give meaning to life in the face of this absurdity by realizing one’s solidarity with others—“I rebel, therefore we are.”<sup>36</sup> Camus’ inclusion here is obviously warranted, and the chapter as a whole could be built around Camus’ philosophy. I do not mean to give short treatment to Camus in this chapter, but I do think that the political outlook of Sartre and Goldman is more germane for my task at hand in articulating a robust shared philosophy of the future for existentialist and anarchists.

Sartre was, like Camus, both an existentialist and an anarchist, though the latter is often overlooked due to a focus on the early Sartre and a disregard for the later Sartre’s political writings. The individual/social problem comes to a head with Sartre. The early Sartre has often been mistakenly understood to be hyper-individualist and plagued with both subjectivism and Cartesian dualism. Sartre quickly moves through some of his own thought on consciousness and human freedom to a richer understanding of social reality and what he calls “practical ensembles.” Sartre’s view is much more complex than the rather misleading “philosopher of freedom” label would indicate.<sup>37</sup>

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36 Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage, 1956), 30.

37 Comparatively little attention has been given to Sartre in the past 25 years, at least not with regard to the social and political dimensions of his existentialism. For some very good analyses, however, see William L. McBride, *Sartre’s Political Theory* (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 1991); Sam Coombes, *The Early Sartre and Marxism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Thomas C. Anderson, *Sartre’s Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1993); Nik Farrell Fox, *The New Sartre: Explorations in Postmodernism* (New York: Continuum, 2003); and T. Storm Heter, *Sartre’s Ethics of Engagement: Authenticity and Civic Virtue* (New York: Continuum, 2006).

Sartre set out to delineate the movement from “serial individuality” to group formation in his masterful *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. I claim that this text is of massive importance for all anarchists who may not even have familiarity with existentialism, and for all existentialist also devoted to radical social change, for the lessons learned are enlightening. What follows is the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* in very condensed form. Book I is an account of individual praxis in the world and the overtaking or co-option of the “practico-inert.” Individual praxis refers to the work one does as a creative project which works the world to condition it (and it would seem all kinds of “work” fit in here). This seems like totally free praxis, akin to the kind of radical freedom of the early Sartre, but this is not the case, for as soon as the world is conditioned by one’s praxis, one is thereby conditioned by what comes of said praxis in an alienated way. This is what Sartre calls the “practico-inert.” Getting lost in the details of this will not be helpful, but the point is that people condition the world and are conditioned by the world.<sup>38</sup>

Now of course individual praxis can become collective praxis, whereby people are joined together in working on a project. For Sartre, the move to what he calls the “fused group” is one in which a common praxis is understood “on the ground” as in his example of the “activists” who stormed the Bastille. This is the rather spontaneous moment of claiming a shared stake in something in an unorganized (formally) way. For Sartre, this is the height of the movement towards group formation because it maintains individual praxis while merging it with the group-in-fusion’s praxis without building in any sort of threat to the members of this group. This translates to a group formed around some common interest, though it need not be for “single-issue” activism. The point is just that Sartre makes the move from the individual to the social formation while both not losing individual integrity and building social cohesiveness. Now, when these groups-in-fusion feel the need to build a lasting group, a more rigid group identity forms, always threatening (terror, for Sartre) individual members if they stray from the group. This new lasting group is called the “pledged group” or “statutory group” because of the sedimentation of group identity to a kind of allegiance.

I submit that it is at this precise juncture where the real question of anarchy comes to the fore for Sartre, but it also is a moment overlooked for its potential. Sartre sees a major problem developing here that sacrifices the individual. What if, countering the threat to individuality, the pledged group pledges “play” instead, where play is understood as an opening to resist the seriousness of order in favor of creating “rules” that can always be changed, disregarded by

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38 Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 161–164.



members, etc.? Without getting into those details further, I claim that Emma Goldman embodies the kind of anarchist here who fits the mold of this playful revolutionary. She embraces the importance of individuality, but resolves to be radically organized in social formations to bring radical change.

Goldman's philosophy is geared around a kind of glorification of the individual coupled with the awareness that society and social relations could be produced in such a way to achieve a maximum enhancement of individuality. This society-to-come is one directly at odds with liberal capitalism (and Soviet or Chinese Communism). This problem of the individual versus the social seems to be nullified by Goldman when she writes:

There is no conflict between the individual and the social instincts: one the receptacle of a precious life essence, the other the repository of the element that keeps the essence pure and strong. The individual is the heart of society, conserving the essence of social life; society is the lungs which are distributing the element to keep the life essence—that is, the individual—pure and strong.<sup>39</sup>

I think it is important to note the role of the term “instincts” here, as one can claim that the individual versus the social might not be a problem whatsoever in terms of fundamental instincts of humans. Much of civilization, and organized life for that matter, is a move away from instincts, however, and it might then be argued that the State (in particular) serves to actually generate conflict between the social and individual at a level beyond the instinctual. A full discussion of that possibility is beyond the purposes of this chapter, but the point remains that while Goldman seems committed to a non-conflict at the instinctual level, this does not mean there is not a problem somewhere. As McLaughlin writes:

the ultimate goal of such a revolutionary process was the realization of individual sovereignty, albeit within the communal context. Thus, with other new anarchists like Herbert Read, Goldman attempted to synthesize the social and individualist traditions of anarchism, consciously drawing on the ideas of Stirner as well as those of Kropotkin. In other words, while she was committed to the classical tradition of social anar-

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39 Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing, 1910), 58.

chism and to communal values, Goldman also warned of the tyranny of the crowd over the individual.<sup>40</sup>

Goldman is one of the prominent figures of anarchism and maybe anarchism's most ardent and honest proponent. But her ties to existentialism have not really been made very clear, and I maintain that her anarchism is rooted in a kind of existential approach to life and the intricacies of lived experience.<sup>41</sup> The embodied revolt against the hyper-negative in life (for her this means, primarily, the State, religion, and capital) that Goldman calls us into is a profound embrace of the positive possibilities for human experience at a fundamental level. This ties directly into her feminism. As Ruth Kinna states:

Emma Goldman's view (which was founded on the broadly existentialist idea that woman's emancipation depended on 'her inner regeneration' and her ability 'to cut loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions, and customs') was that anarchy would liberate women from the subordinate social role associated with marriage and enable them to find fulfilment in heterosexual, family relationships.<sup>42</sup>

Goldman's anarcha-feminism relies on a primarily existentialist understanding of the rejection of the normalization of society. Her affinity for Nietzsche drives the point further:

I had to do my reading at the expense of much-needed sleep; but what was physical strain in view of my raptures over Nietzsche? The fire of his soul, the rhythm of his song, made life richer, fuller, and more wonderful for me ... His aristocracy was neither of birth nor of purse; it was of the spirit. In that respect Nietzsche was an anarchist, and all true anarchists were aristocrats.<sup>43</sup>

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40 Paul McGlaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism*. (Basingstoke, U.K.: Ashgate, 2007), 162.

41 Remarkably, there is a dearth of sustained philosophical treatment of the thought of Emma Goldman. There are a fair number of good biographical (mostly) works, but few which delve deep enough into her social and political philosophy. Among these, see Kathy E. Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011) and Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger, *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

42 Ruth Kinna, *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 79.

43 Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* [1931 and 1934], <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-living-my-life>.

Goldman sees the transformative power of the existentialist spirit and links it directly to the anarchist spirit. Her role at the International Anarchist Congress in 1907 in Amsterdam was instrumental in both defending individuality and in working to mark “the arrival of anarchism as a social theory and not a philosophy of the individual.”<sup>44</sup> This is what fits right into where Sartre’s theory of group formation left in the tension over the protection of individuality and the securing of the social over time. The cultivation of solidarity is the common thread that unites the individual and social instincts. This solidarity is located, in my view, primarily in affinity groups based on cooperation, as long as such groups remain resistant to any “threatening pledges” and “binding resolutions.” In interpreting Kropotkin, Goldman writes:

What wonderful results this unique force of man’s individuality can achieve when strengthened by cooperation with other individualities! Cooperation—as opposed to internecine strife and struggle—has worked for the survival and evolution of the species ... only mutual aid and voluntary cooperation can create the basis for a free individual and associational life.<sup>45</sup>

The existentialist who attempts to live “underground” or who is always confronted by “nausea” is avoiding the social dimension instead of making the social dimension a part of the life one is creating. This is absolutely not to say that such individuals are wrong in their fundamental analyses of being-in-the-world, but rather that the creative power to “cut loose from the weight of prejudices, traditions, and customs” involves other individuals mired in those prejudices, traditions, and customs.

The anarchist looking to be productive in the world and instrumental in radical change also may benefit from this awareness, but this is to be coupled with the kind of embrace of joy and willingness to be transformed by life experience, love, and play like Emma Goldman, for that is what conquers the overwhelming existential despair brought about by the persistent awareness that there is not “another world” but only this one. That is, a world muddled with prejudices, traditions, and customs laying claim on our responsibility to transform them.

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44 Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*, trans. Paul Sharkey (Oakland, Calif.: AK Press, 2002), 85–86.

45 Emma Goldman, *Red Emma Speaks*, ed. A.K. Shulman (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 1998), 118.

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